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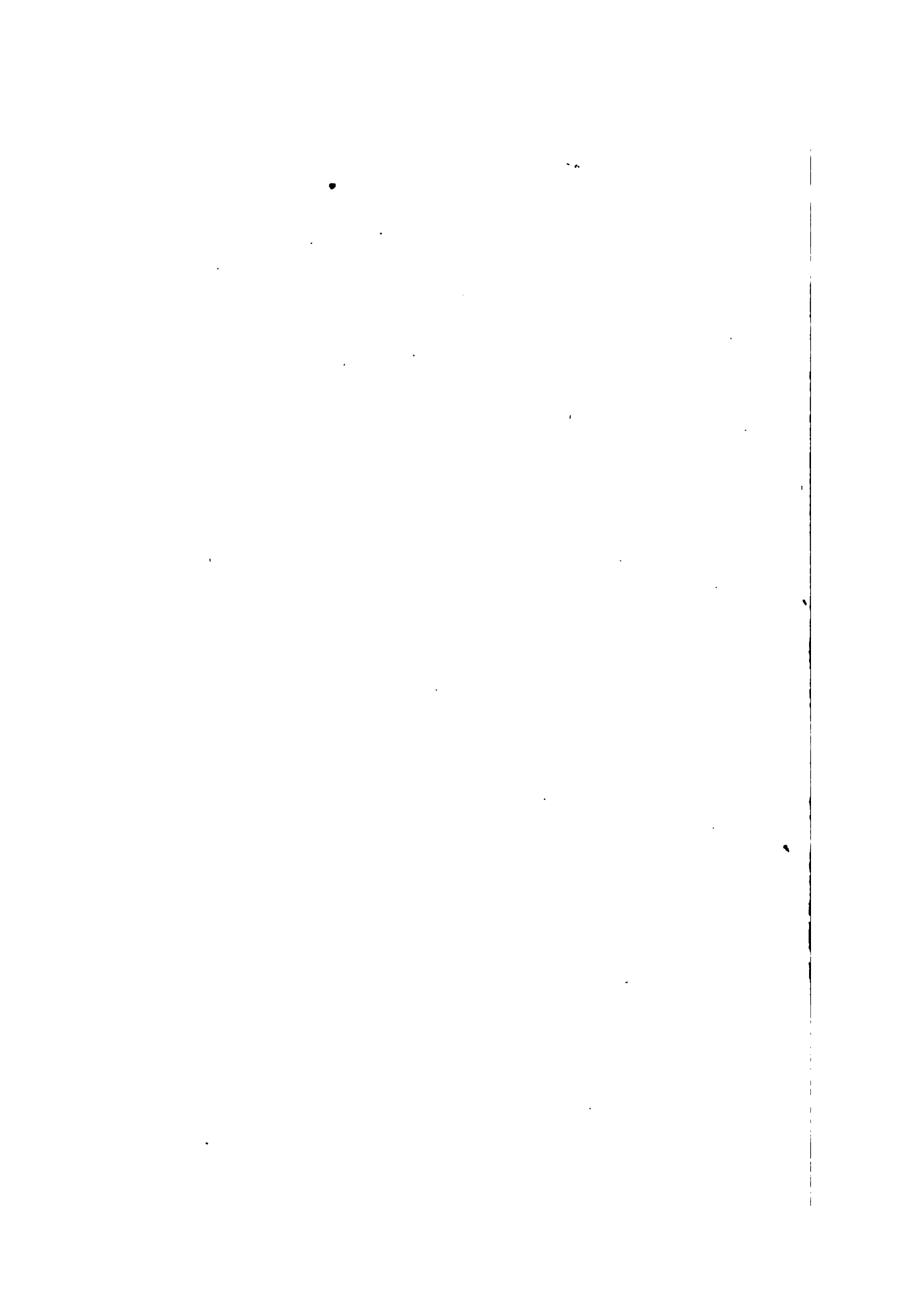
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ROBERT FERGUSON

"THE PLOTTER"



ROBERT FERGUSON
THE PLOTTER

OR

*THE SECRET OF THE RYE-HOUSE CONSPIRACY
AND THE STORY OF A STRANGE CAREER*

BY

JAMES FERGUSON
ADVOCATE



Et licetque decus tandem posteritas rependit

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following pages are mainly founded on original papers in the Public Record Office London, the merit of discovering which belongs to Mr. J. B. Marsh, author of a novel, published in 1873, and called *For Liberty's Sake*. The contents of one of these documents, and the career of the personage to whom they relate, seemed to me of sufficient public interest and historical importance to deserve a careful record, otherwise than in the pages of fiction, and circumstances gave me access to a few other materials—unfortunately very scanty—that must have been unknown to any one else who might undertake the work. The literary treatment of a historical subject, by one who has only been able to devote to it the intervals of leisure afforded by other work must necessarily be imperfect, but my aim has been to “extenuate nought,” and simply to describe “The Plotter” as he was. As this to some extent impeached the accuracy of existing

delineations, it seemed important to give the *ipsis-sima verba* of original authorities more frequently than would otherwise have been desirable.

I have to express my acknowledgments to Mr. J. B. Marsh; Mr. W. D. Selby, of the Public Record Office, London; Mr. Clark, the Keeper, and Mr. Stronach, of the Advocates' Library, for the assistance and courtesy I have received.

J. F.

EDINBURGH, *May* 1887.

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“ *Mr. R. Ferguson, who was commonly reckoned a man by himself, and of as odd a make and mixture as any man of this age. . . . A true history of his life would have discovered a great many secrets.*” CALAMY.

“ *Shall that false Hebronite escape our curse,
Judas, that keeps the rebels' pension-purse?
Judas, that pays the treason-writer's fee?
Judas, that well deserves his namesake's tree?*”

DRYDEN, *Abalom and Achitophel.*

“ *All the conspirators, save only he,
Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar ;
He only, in a general honest thought,
And common good to all, made one of them.*”

SHAKESPEARE, *Julius Cæsar.*

“ *One touch alone softens the character of this extraordinary incendiary :
in all his difficulties he is never charged with betraying his associates.*”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

ROBERT FERGUSON "THE PLOTTER."

INTRODUCTION.

"Even pamphlets, writ on different sides and on different occasions in our party disputes, and histories of no more authority than pamphlets, will help you to come at truth. Read them with suspicion, my lord, for they deserve to be suspected: pay no regard to the epithets given, nor to the judgments passed; neglect all declamation, weigh the reasoning, and advert to fact—with such precautions even Burnet's History may be of some use."—BOLINGBROKE, *Eighth Letter on The Study of History.*

IN the pages of one of the lighter works in which he developed political doctrine, Lord Beaconsfield once observed that if the history of England were ever written by one who had the knowledge and the courage, the world would be more astonished than when reading the Roman Annals by Niebuhr. "Generally speaking," he remarked, "all the great events have been distorted, most of the important causes concealed, some of the principal characters never appear, and all who figure are so misunderstood and misrepresented that the result is a complete mystification." "A remarkable feature," he added, "of our written history is the absence in its pages of some of the most influential personages. Not one man in a thousand, for instance, has ever heard of Major Wildman; yet he was the soul of English

politics in the most eventful period of this kingdom, and one most interesting to this age, from 1640 to 1688, and seemed more than once to hold the balance which was to decide the permanent form of our government. But he was the leader of an unsuccessful party." These observations are not inapplicable to the career of the individual associated with Wildman in some of his undertakings, whose name heads these pages. Robert Ferguson has been, if not one of the suppressed characters of English history, certainly a distorted one. Nor is it difficult to account for this. Ever restless, and always in opposition to the established Government, he provoked the denunciation of Court champions previous to the Revolution, and his subsequent adherence to the Jacobite cause deprived him of the countenance of Whig writers. There was, however, an individuality about him which invited portraiture and lent itself to caricature. He was picturesque enough to attract attention, but not prominent enough to secure careful inquiry and examination. He has found no friends among historians,¹ and has been handled by the painters of the past as a subsidiary figure, dashed off in broad colours for effect, and contrasting in his lurid tints with the finer workmanship devoted to those who occupy the centre of the canvas.

Undoubtedly he offered every inducement and facility for this operation. He lived in times when public virtue was low, and his name crops up among companions, and in situations, where such virtue as there was, was conspicuously absent; yet the same name is found in close association with others round which veneration still clings. The epithet that history attaches to him was absolutely true, yet from his pen there flowed most orthodox treatises of evangelical theology. His career seems a mass of contradictions, and he moved unharmed through the most perilous scenes of a

¹ *Vide* App. II.

disturbed and stormy era. Country clergyman and political intriguer—Presbyterian, Independent, and Episcopalian in succession—he was deep in the secret of the most carefully concealed cabals, and yet his activity and his partisanship were open and notorious. He plotted against King Charles, he rose in arms against King James, he conspired against King William, and he showed that his hand had not lost its cunning in the days of Good Queen Anne. His invectives against the Duke of York were said to have disturbed the peace of the Merry Monarch in his last days of life; his deep repentance for these invectives brought tears to the eyes of James in his hours of exile. He was offered a Professorship in Holland, and he broke a lance in controversy with William Penn. If he did not plant, he watered the seed that bore fruit in mortal strife on English soil and was garnered in the fell harvest of the Bloody Assizes. He embroiled two Houses of Parliament; he nearly set the Legislatures of two independent nations in collision. Outlawed in England, and a mark for the coarse wit of Jeffreys, he was forfeited in Scotland at the instance of "The Bluidy Mackenzie." The scene changes, and under the lash of his pen the great Lord Stair winces in the President's chair of the Court of Session; while the Lord Chief-Justice of England and a Whig Secretary of State receive stinging letters from him on the abuse of power. The colleague of Dr. Owen and the close adviser of Monmouth, he becomes in later life the confidential correspondent of the exiled King at St. Germain. He vindicates the enterprise of William of Orange, and five years later proves as satisfactorily that it was not undertaken in favour either of our religion or our laws. An intimate connection with Holland enables him the better in after years to depict the depredations of the Dutch; and, living for more than half a century in England, he still is ready to champion the Scottish aspirations of the

Darien Scheme. The son of a Cavalier, he spends two-thirds of his life as a Whig and a Nonconformist, and dies a High Churchman and a Jacobite. He narrowly escapes being sent by William of Orange to suffer, along with Payne, the tortures that had been prepared for him in other company in the days of the Rye Plot; and when one companion after another has gone to a bloody grave, or mounted to high office, he dies an old man in safety and in poverty.

No period in the history of Britain is more full of interest and instruction than that which commences with the Restoration of the Stuarts and closes with the accession of the House of Hanover. It witnessed the infant struggles and the boisterous youth of "Whig and Tory, the furious children of the inauspicious parents Roundhead and Cavalier," and in it the seeds were sown of the future development of the British Empire. The character of our polity and the nature of our parties for long years after received their impress in that exciting age; and the story of one who mixed so deeply in its most startling passages is of sufficient general importance to merit inquiry and deserve a separate record. The Plotter was a characteristic product of his time. The displacement of the Nonconformist divines on Bartholomew Day 1662, points the substitution of the wild career that fate had assigned him for the one he had chosen for himself, and the book of his life was closed in the year that saw the last of a Stuart's reign in England. But even the strange influences of the time could only produce their full effects on a character of marked originality and force. And if the genius of the Plotter was misdirected, it was great; his grasp of mind was large, and the most perilous situations and ponderous themes he enlivened with bold flashes of peculiar humour. So much the materials accessible to all historians enable us to say; but the recesses of the State Paper Office have in recent years disclosed records

that add another and very different element to the estimate of his individuality. In private letters there preserved, he reveals the inner side of his character, and it harmonises ill with the hue of unrelieved black in which he has generally been portrayed. But what is of more value, we obtain his own account of the most important of the many transactions in which he moved, his part in which has done more than anything else to stamp his fame. That account aids in the elucidation of a dark passage in our annals, and it throws additional light on declarations made by dying men on Tower Hill and in the Grassmarket.

Ferguson the Plotter has generally been represented as the moving spirit of the darkest part of the Rye-House Plot, that contemplated the assassination of King Charles II. and his brother James, Duke of York. The narrative now available must reverse the verdict of history upon that charge, and reveals the hidden causes that led to the miscarriage of the nefarious design. In the following pages it will be examined, fitted into, and tested by other contemporary records; but it should be at once observed that there was a very conclusive and convincing reason why the facts it discloses could not be elicited at the time. That reason was the Duke of Monmouth's knowledge of the design. To know and not reveal was treason in any, but something more in the son of the King; yet to reveal would be to involve his friends in common ruin, to cover himself with infamy, and perhaps merely to hasten and ensure the perpetration of the fact. It was essential that the very knowledge that thwarted such a scheme should be itself concealed, and even after the death of Monmouth silence on such matters was for long the best policy. So, to all contemporaries save those fully behind the scenes, Ferguson's name went forth connected with the worst of crimes, and his lips were sealed. Perhaps some knew, and more

suspected, that things were not so bad as they looked ; but such a state of affairs explains much that is disparaging in the general opinion of the time. "The Plotter," in the course of his career, had enough to answer for ; but the heaviest stone around his neck was the scheme that he had done most to sink. That a man so actively engaged should have been completely misunderstood in one great transaction of his career is enough to invite investigation ; and the whole story of his life is so strange and illustrative of the age, that it has seemed worth while to collect and piece together the scattered memorials that are to be found of him in the highways and the byways of historical research. The result of the completed picture may be warning rather than example—it may but show blighted schemes and efforts that deserved to be unavailing ; yet it must add something to our knowledge of a fascinating past, and it affords a remarkable example of the indomitable energy and the far-reaching activity of "the Scot abroad."

Denounced by Burton as "that unworthy Scot, the real demon of the Assassination Plot," pilloried by Macaulay in one of the most elaborate of his portraits, and disparaged by Burnet with an acerbity that suggests personal rivalry, the Plotter found no one to say a good word for him for generations, with the single exception of Sir Walter Scott, whose observant eye was struck by the fact that "he never betrayed an associate." At last, a glimpse into his correspondence led the biographer of Shaftesbury to mention him as one "whom Dryden has scurrilously maligned," and the discoverer of his buried writings made him the central figure of an historical romance¹ called "For Liberty's Sake." But though Mr. Marsh's story corrected existing delineations, it still only exhibited him in a half light ; for the author was unacquainted with his birth and surroundings, and limits his

¹ *Vide* App. II.

tale to the period preceding the Revolution. Much of his hero's future still remained to be unrolled, and it is that future which gives its greatest peculiarity to his character, and renders the task of estimating it correctly a difficult one. A Nonconformist minister of great talent, forced by oppression into sedition, might be common enough in those days, and the drama of his story would fittingly conclude with the disaster that overtook those who had misused their power. But the biographer cannot thus curtail his subject, and the lives of active men are not terminated by great political changes. So strange as it seems, the Plotter's life must be taken as a whole, and indeed its very anomalies and contradictions contribute to its interest as a biographical study. In endeavouring to trace it out, I shall leave him to tell his own story as much as possible, and consign the result to the impartial judgment of tolerant posterity. Justice and truth require that from even an abandoned man the darkest stain should be wiped, if undeserved. It is for the advantage of the country that the story of every man who aided to mould her fate should be truly told, be it good or bad; and, perhaps, if inconsistency or change of view be suspected when it leads to the lion's share of high place and power, it should receive the recognition of sincere conviction when its only recompense is obloquy, injury, and neglect.

CHAPTER I.

16— TO 1679.

BIRTH—EARLY LIFE—AND THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS.

ROBERT FERGUSON, known to history as "the Plotter," was the eldest son of William Ferguson of Badifurrow, in Aberdeenshire. He was probably born in an old house in the burgh of Inverurie, which tradition, preserved in various branches of his family, declared to have been the residence of his ancestors for more than 300 years before the great Civil War. They are first to be traced among the burgesses of the royal burgh, which grew up as the capital of the Garioch, a central district of Aberdeenshire, lying between the ancient feudal earldoms of Mar and Buchan, and for long retained as the private property of the King or his near kinsmen. There Robert the Bruce had rested on his own estates in the midst of the War of Independence, and risen from his sick-bed to break the power of the hostile house of Comyn and their English allies. There, too, little more than a century later, it was decided, on "the red Harlaw," whether plaided clansman or Lowland baron and burgher was to be supreme in Scotland. Tradition records that after the battle of Inverurie, in 1308, King Robert gave small holdings of land connected with the little town he sought to foster to those who had done him yeoman's service in the strife, and that among the recipients was the ancestor of the family from which the Plotter sprang. Perhaps the legend is confirmed by the frequency with which their name appears in

the earliest records of the place, and the fact that the lands of which their original heritage formed part were held directly of the Crown, and not, as was generally the case in Scottish burghs, and to a large extent in Inverurie, through the magistrates.

When Cavalier and Covenanter were contending for the mastery, Inverurie was a more important place than it is to-day. Its central situation, within convenient distance of Aberdeen, and yet not so far from the districts that sent their high-spirited horsemen and sturdy foot to follow the banner of the Loyalist house of Huntly, made it more than once the mustering-place of armies; and it was visited in turn by the great leaders in the strife, Huntly, Montrose, and Argyle. The life of the boy, destined to pass through many strange scenes and stirring experiences, began amid surroundings that were sufficiently exciting. He would hear as a child, by the winter fireside, awe-inspiring stories of that mysterious tragedy, the burning of Frendraught, never wholly cleared up, and commemorated in one of the most graphic of our old ballads, and as a youth might study for his benefit in later days the effect upon a contest concerning the Constitution and the Kirk of the "rankling of the old ill-cured wound" of feudal enmity between the Gordons and the Forbesees. He might even on some holiday have climbed the commanding summit of Benachie, and marked with more curiosity than fear a cloud in the far distance, that told of squadrons and battalions in the field, and a tottering throne. A few years later he might have watched the young Charles Stuart ride past on his way to the prelections of the Presbyterian divines and the perils of the Royal Oak. It was as the cavalcade rode out from the neighbouring mansion of Pitcaple that the "good wife of Glack," seeing the Marquis of Argyle at the young monarch's bridle-rein, exclaimed, "God bless your Majesty, and send ye safe to yer

ain, but there are those at your side that took aff your father's heid, and, if ye hae na care, will tak aff yours also." If he had heard the prediction, did any recollection of it flash into his mind long after the head of Argyle had replaced that of Montrose on the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, and when he was corresponding with his son in the days of the Rye Plot?

The experiences of "the Troubles" were well calculated to breed the generation of public men whose laxity of principle scandalises us in the history of the years that succeeded the Restoration and the Revolution. The earlier period is the key to the later, and to understand the persecutions of "the Fanatics," we must remember the sufferings of "the Malig-nants." Similarly, when it surprises us to find a clergyman of evangelical erudition mixing as the moving spirit in the most perilous phases of politics, the mystery is lessened when we discover that before his settlement in a Kentish parsonage he had been bred amid the scenes of civil war in the part of Scotland that suffered longest from its scourge. One episode at any rate may have been impressed on his memory. On the 11th of April 1644, the Marquis of Huntly, the King's Lieutenant in the North, mustered his Cavalier following to the number of 2500 men, of whom 400 were horsemen, in Inverurie, and on that occasion he was for two nights the guest of the future Plotter's father, while his men lay quartered all around him throughout the town. That very Sunday he was solemnly excommunicated by the Covenanters in the Church of St. Giles at Edinburgh. But, although the tradition among the Jacobites of 1745 was that "Inverurie was always a loyal place," and the Laird of Badifurrow became its representative in the Scottish Parliament during the three years that immediately followed the Restoration, and aided in the pageant with which the triumphant Cavaliers took down the head of the great Montrose from the spike on which it had blenched, and laid the honoured

remains to rest in the church that had rung with the excommunications of the Royalists, his eldest son must early have commenced to exhibit his idiosyncrasy of running counter to the established order of his place and time. The eldest of a large family, he seems to have completely severed his connection with his early home, and notices of his relatives are extremely rare in his future history. The paths in life of these, who had fished together in the Dou and Ury, scrambled to the top of that weird conical mount the Bass of Inverurie, and talked in trembling accents of the plague that was said to lie hidden within it, were indeed to be very different, and illustrative of a Scottish household of the time. When Robert disappeared from his place at the head of the family, the next brother William became his father's heir, and finally succeeded him in his estate of Badifurrow. Among his descendants were Lord Pitfour, an eminent and humorous Scottish Judge, who had acted as counsel for the Jacobites at Carlisle, and his sons, one a "Father of the House of Commons" and devoted friend and supporter of the younger Pitt, and another a gallant officer who on one occasion in an American battle held the life of Washington in his hand, and closed his own, "fighting as becomes a hero," on the bloodstained crest of King's Mountain. James, the third son, went to seek his fortune in one of the Scottish regiments in the service of Holland, and returned to his native land with William of Orange. Described by one commanding officer, good old General Mackay, as "*personne de probité et d'honneur*," and by another, the great Duke of Marlborough, as "an officer of merit whose death was a great loss to the public," he served with credit in the Scots campaign; the bloodshed of Steinkirk and Landen brought him the colonelcy of the Cameronians, and he commanded a brigade at Blenheim. The lands of Balmakelly and Kirktonhill, in Kincardineshire, gave him a Scottish home,

which his son preferred to replace in their native county by substituting for them those of Kinmundy and Coynach, in Aberdeenshire. More than once the paths of Brigadier Ferguson and his elder brother were to cross; and as Dryden impressed into his service the worst name of the New Testament to immortalise the one, so a humbler Jacobite poet (the reverend author of "Tullochgorum") turned to the most hated figure of the Old, and elaborately compared the daughter-in-law of the other to Jezebel for her Hanoverian activity in the '45.

The younger brothers of the Plotter—George, John, and Walter—lived uneventful lives in the North. Of George, it is recorded that, in the famine of 1696, he and a friend proposed to import and sell a large quantity of corn to the starving poor in their own neighbourhood at a price to be fixed by the authorities, desiring no profit, "but allenarly the keeping of the poor in the said shire from starving." A descendant of his, a naval officer, known as "the Black Captain" by the Highlanders of the West, was to be the hottest presser of the chase after the fugitive Prince Charlie, to act the stern custodian to Flora Macdonald, and to make a lesser prize in the capture of Lord Lovat. One of John's grandsons attained to good station in the Austrian army. A descendant of Walter, the youngest son, to whom his father left the old house and holding in Inverurie, was to become the head of a great banking house in Eastern Europe; sit in the Polish Diet, and correspond with Frederick of Prussia. One of his sons held a commission in the Russian Guards. The only sister of these six brothers is said to have made in real life the answer which Longfellow attributes to his Puritan Maiden in "Miles Standish." So hot-tempered and strong-willed was the girl, brought up among a band of boys, that her friends called her in derision "gentle Janet." A faint-hearted aspirant to her hand had employed a cousin

of her own as his envoy, with the result that, on the lady's suggestion, she married the ambassador, and settled in Poland. Such was the household from which Robert Ferguson went forth to a unique career.

It is perhaps noteworthy that at a time when his name was buried in musty histories, and any details of his life forgotten by the descendants of the brothers he had left, the tradition still faintly survived that before his departure he had received "a liberal education."¹ An entry in the records of the University of Aberdeen may enable us to discover where the foundations were laid of the varied and extensive learning that Ferguson was afterwards to press with equal eagerness into the service of theology and of the politics of the hour. Among those who studied there in the year 1650 were "Robertus Fergusone Aberdonensis," and "Gulielmus Fergusone Aberdonensis," who may possibly have been the two eldest sons of the future member for Inverurie. The exact date of the Plotter's birth is uncertain. In 1683 the proclamation offering a reward for his apprehension describes him as about forty-five years of age; in 1713 Wodrow speaks of him as upwards of ninety years of age; and in 1704 he alludes himself to having lived in England since 1655. But if educated at the Oxford of the North, he did not imbibe its spirit; and it is interesting to notice the account of him that was sent to his native county, when his name filled the ear of the metropolis as the most daring of conspirators. "There is one thing," wrote Sir Andrew Forrester to Lord Aberdeen, on the 26th June 1683, "for which I am very heartily sorry, that some of our countrymen will be found to have been deeply engaged in this hellish contrivance, particularly one Ferguson (born near Aberdeen) a phanatick preacher, who has been nearly thirty years in this country, where he learned those diabolical

¹ Kinmundy ms.

principles and practices ; which (God be thanked) have been and ever will be abhorred (I hope) in that loyall as well as truly learned University." Wherever the opinions that distinguished him for the first half of his life were learned, they certainly clashed with the Cavalier sentiments of his father : his name disappears from the circle of his relatives in the North, and he departs to pass a long life amid companionships of the most antagonistic kind, and in scenes and surroundings strangely diverse in their character.

According to Wodrow, who describes him as "a very pragmaticall man," he had originally been a minister in Scotland, and went up to England after the Restoration. But in this Wodrow is not altogether accurate, for at the Restoration Ferguson held the living of Godmarsham, in Kent. He fell within the sweep of the Act of Uniformity, and was one of the 2000 who went forth from their homes on the morning of Bartholomew Day 1662. We realise the contrasts of the time when we compare the son swept from his country church and parsonage in the pleasant land of Kent, with the father voting for the Act Rescissory in the Scottish Parliament, amid the boisterous joy of which the memory survives in the tradition of the Drunken Parliament.

The thread of Robert Ferguson's career had been rudely snapped, and it is difficult to trace it for some time to come. At one time he found in his reading and his talents the source of his support, for Wood describes him as "a noted Scotch divine who taught boys grammar and University learning at Islington, near London," and Dryden alludes to the college over which he presided. He also preached to large congregations at Moorfields, and was for some time assistant to the eminent Nonconformist theologian, Dr. John Owen. "His book on Justification," says Wodrow, "did very much ingratiate him with Dr. Owen, the patriarch of the Independents. At London, in a solemn meeting, he

renounced his communion with the Church of Scotland, and alleged that was a head too big for the body. In a coffee-house he had one of the glibbest tongues in England upon all subjects, yet when in the pulpit he was exceedingly dry and straitened. He used his papers, and inclined to make extemporary flights, but frequently faltered. He preached much with Dr. Owen." When the venerable theologian died on the anniversary of Bartholomew Day, in August 1683, and his will was opened, it was found that he had left a legacy of £5 to his old colleague, who was then a fugitive in Holland. Ferguson's letters show that he was also on friendly terms with Dr. Owen's brother, Colonel Owen, who had served under Cromwell in Ireland.

At an early stage in the course of his life in England, Ferguson became a source of anxiety to Ministers of State, and made an acquaintance with the interior of a Government prison. For among the State papers in the Public Record Office there are some which show that his activity as a theological writer was preceded as well as followed by energy displayed in more mundane and perilous occupations. On 15th January 1662-63, only five months after the ejection of the Nonconforming ministers, one Robert Johnston wrote to Secretary Bennet, giving directions "how to find Ferguson, a Scotch minister, who said that Mr. Calamy and Mr. Jenkins had a public stock for encouragement of ejected ministers." Ferguson is described as being "one of the pensioners," and Johnston mentions that "he knows of their meetings; he said there would be an insurrection, and knows of the union endeavoured between Presbyterians and Independents." Next day (January 16) there was issued a warrant to Major Strachan to apprehend Robert Ferguson, and bring him before Secretary Bennet, and an entry in identical terms occurs two days later. Major Strachan's exertions were successful, and on January 21st there passed a

“warrant for Robt. Ferguson to be committed close prisoner to the Gatehouse for treasonable practises.” Here he was detained as a “suspect” for a considerable time, for later on we find him presenting a petition to Government which runs thus:—

“To the Right Hon. Sir HENRY BENNET, Principal Secretary of State to His Majestie,

“The humble Petition of ROBERT FERGUSON,

“*Sheweth,*

That above five weeks since your Pet^r was by your Hon^s order imprisoned without being examined, or any cause shown for his commitment, and ever since hath been detained close prisoner in the Gatehouse, not so much as a friend being admitted to see him, notwithstanding he is conscious to himselfe that he never in the least committed anything against his sacred Ma^{tie} or Government, to violate his bounden loyalty, but was ever a promoter of His Ma^{tie}'s royal interest to the utmost of his power.

“Wherefore, and for that his poore wife and children are by this his confinement reduced to great streights, they having no fortune in the world, nor anything to subsist by, your pet^r most humbly prays your hon^r that he may be either examined or brought to a speedy tryall, that soe his innocency may appeare, and that in the meantime his friends may be permitted to come to him to supply his pressing necessities.

“And yo^r Pet^r shall ever pray, etc.”

This application was attended with eventual, if not immediate success, for on the 12th of May there was executed a bond by Robert Ferguson of Tottenham High Cross, and two others in £300, for his good behaviour, not countenancing any design against the Government, and appearing

before a Secretary of State when summoned. On the same day there is this entry: "Warrant to Sir Edw. Broughton, keeper of the Gatehouse, to release (Rob.) Ferguson, he having given good security for allegiance and appearance when summoned." The bond bears to be signed, sealed, and delivered by "Rob. Ferguson" and his sureties, "William Ambler, Haberdasher of small wares, Old Bayley Parish; and Angues Grayham, Hatmaker, Sanct Bride's Parish." They were probably members of his congregation, and he is designed as of "Tottenham High Cross." In the letter which Johnston had written to Secretary Bennet relative to his seizure, the directions given for his discovery are: "First enquire for him at Doctors Commons, next at ye White Hart at ye upper end of Cheapside, or at an Alderman's house at Tot-nam High Cross."

But although thus early in his career he had become obnoxious to Government, some years were to pass before the events occurred which made his name notorious, and for a while his activity was rather theological than political. The petition to Secretary Bennet shows that he had been married while yet a beneficed clergyman, and had at least two children. We get a first glimpse into the happy domestic relations contemporary with his tortuous and troubled outward life, from the following letter to his wife, preserved in the national archives. It seems to have been treasured for fifteen years before it was rudely seized, and shows, like all others to her, a very different side of the Plotter's character from that manifested in the conclave of the Rye House conspiracy, or in the confusion of the rout of Sedgemoor:—

"MY OWN AND ONLY DEAR,—I already find that whatever I enjoy at home cannot complete a satisfaction while thou art wanting, neither have I the least desire to raise a con-

tentment from the company of friends, as knowing it were but vainly to pursue that elsewhere which you alone can perfect. However, these little divorces are sometimes requisite to enhance a value. What we are constantly in the fruition of, that we seldom justly prize. I desire to esteem thee next to Him who is above all esteem; and oh! that both solitude and society might further lead us into love of and admiration of Him, who must be our all when all ceases to be. Improve the country to the utmost of what it can yield, and let not my absence eclipse the content that otherwise thou wouldest find. After due commandment to friends, I subjoin that I am, dearest heart, entirely thine,

“RO. FERGUSON.

“*Aug. 22, 1668.*”

Late in life Ferguson drew up a list of his writings, dividing them into three categories. The first comprises three works “relating to religion,” and the earliest of these was published in the year in which this letter was written. It consisted of an independent treatise with an appendix containing a detailed vindication of a sermon “preached at the morning lecture” from “the frivolous objections of a late Socinian pamphlet.” The spread of Socinian doctrine had apparently decided Ferguson, after careful reflection, to deal with the subject in the pulpit, with a boldness that in the state of the Statute-book, was not without danger. “The art,” he says, “of that exercise was beforehand considered, and, whatever may be the consequences of it, I hope to have satisfaction and peace in the bearing and encountering of them.” The text of his sermon was in Hebrews ii. 10, and it was criticised under the signature of H. W., in a pamphlet called, “The freeness of God’s grace in the forgiveness of Sins by Jesus Christ.” Ferguson, in replying, says of H. W., that “it had been but ingenuous when he had published the name of another, and in that exposed him to the law, to

have given a more particular account of himself," and deals forcibly and logically with the objections and arguments of the pamphlet. But the critic had roused a champion who was not contented with mere defence. The reply is appended to a compact little treatise of great ability, erudition, and clearness, entitled, "Justification onely upon a Satisfaction : or the Necessity and Verity of the Satisfaction of Christ, as the alone ground of remission of sin, asserted and opened against the Socinians. (By Robert Ferguson, London 1668)." The work is a concise and spirited defence of the doctrine of the Atonement, and proves the author to have been possessed of a ready and tenacious memory, and to have deeply studied and steeped his mind in the Sacred Scriptures.

The first chapter is devoted to a clear understanding of the sense of the term Justification. In the second he argues that Justification is an act of justice, not of mercy; that neither sorrow for the offence, confession, remission, or sustaining of the penalty makes the unjust just. There must be a satisfaction, not in kind but in value, and on behalf of, but not necessarily by, the transgressor. In the third chapter he contends that to be justified we must be arraigned and plead. We cannot plead "Not guilty," and we cannot plead mercy for the sake of mercy, for "with God," he says, in words that recall Spenser's exhortation to the Red Cross Knight in the cave of Despair, "there is the freest grace and the fullest justice." We must plead mercy upon a satisfaction. So he goes on to develop the doctrine of the reconciling of the Infinite Justice and Infinite Mercy of God as operated in the self-sacrifice of His Son, pointing out the fallacy lying in the Socinian conception of the Divine relation. Dealing as it must with the human imagery of debt and payment, of the penniless debtor obnoxious to the law, it regards God as a creditor, and forgets that He is also Governor and Judge. A chapter is devoted to showing

that the atonement was the only adequate end of the Saviour's sufferings; that He did not die primarily to seal or confirm the covenant, nor to give an example of suffering with patience. In the fifth, in which the author deals with the mystery of Christ in His Passion bearing the sins of men, there is one beautiful and expressive passage. He has examined the Greek words used by the various evangelists, to show the intensity of agony which they denote, and, after alluding to the strange physical symptom that evidenced the culmination of the mental anguish, he continues: "Tears were not sufficient evidences of his inward sufferings, nor could the sorrows of his heart be vented enough at his eyes, but the innumerable pores of his body must represent and speak the bitter anguish of his soul. There is no instance can parallel it. That a person under no distemper of body, who beforehand had agreed to lay down his life, and was now willing to do it: a person perfectly innocent both in nature and life, under no accusation of conscience as to personal guilt; free from all solicitude in reference to the cares of the world and certain of a crown of glory, should be under such anguish and consternation; which clearly argues that it did not proceed from the consideration of mere natural death, but from the sense of Divine wrath and the feeling of the curse." . . . "To say that all this was only from a pre-apprehension of his bodily sufferings is a most irrational as well as a false suggestion: for what were this but to abase the valour and courage of Christ below that of thousands of men, who have undauntedly, at least with less consternation, encountered death in its most terrible shapes."

It may be questioned whether the aspect of our Lord's suffering that strikes thinking men most has ever been put more simply or impressively than by this old divine imbued with the Puritan theology, whom history was to

hand down as a traitor to his associates and a would-be assassin of his Prince. He goes on to argue that the fact of satisfaction is established by the suffering having been "in our room and stead," by its result having been redemption, and its consequence reconciliation. And the last chapter is devoted to the practical conclusion, that the application of the satisfaction made to the individual man must be upon some condition, and "that it was most agreeable to the Divine wisdom that faith should be the condition."

This little work is certainly one of great power and insight, and the learning and authority proper to the subject are remarkably reinforced from other sources. The Decii Alcestis and Antinous may without surprise be encountered as types of a greater self-sacrifice, but we scarcely expect to find one of the theological faculty illustrating the faith delivered to the saints with maxims of the Roman law, episodes occurring in the Court of Aldermen, or conjectures as to whether it might be lawful for the Judges to forgive in the case of their own houses, "supposing the Papists should be convicted of having burned London."

In the year 1670 there was published a work by Samuel Parker, Bishop of Oxford, called "A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Polity, wherein the authority of the Civil Magistrate over the consciences of subjects in matters of Eternal Religion is asserted," the title of which sufficiently indicates the tenor of its argument; and in 1672 the same prelate prefixed a polemical preface to a work of Bramhall's, entitled "A Vindication of the Bishops from the Presbyterian charge of Popery." These appearances brought down upon Parker the wrath of the great Nonconformist writer Andrew Marvell, who took from Buckingham's satirical play "The Rehearsal," then at the height of its popularity, the name of his reply, which was headed, "The Rehearsal Transposed."

Marvell's work was an able one, consisting largely of a defence of Milton, and in 1673 Parker rejoined with a "Reproof to the Rehearsal Transposed."

Among those who joined in the fray on the Nonconformist side was Robert Ferguson, who that same year published a treatise, called "A sober enquiry into the nature, measure, and principle of Moral Virtue—Its distinction from Gospel-Holiness, with reflections upon what occurs disserviceable to truth and religion in three late books, viz. Ecclesiastical Polity, Defence and Continuation, and Reproof to the Rehearsal Transposed. By R. F." This work was dedicated to Sir Charles Wolseley, Baronet, and had for its motto the words of Erasmus—" *Unus tamen scrupulus habet animam meam ne sub obtentu priscae literaturæ caput erigere tentet Paganismus.*"

Some passages, from a preface "To the Reader," are interesting as specimens of his diction, and indications of his character. "No one," he says, "is responsible for it but myself: whatever mistakes, failures, etc., are in it, I am only accountable for them. As for the main of the discourse, I leave it to stand or fall as it shall be found in the judgment of Christians and scholars. I know I have not been able to wed the Graces to the Muses: it satisfies me if the sword have a good edge, though the handle of it be not well gilt. Nor do I despise anything more than Rhetoric, putting an ostracion upon Logic; though otherwise I like the meat the better for having a pleasant sauce." Animadverting on the violent expressions of his opponent, he observes—"Men do but disserve their own designs by writing huffingly: nor will any one that is wise judge the worse of a cause by finding it reviled and slandered." Referring to attacks on J. O., he remarks: "I know there needs none to vindicate that worthy person but himself, or rather he needs not do it, carrying a justification in this matter in the hearts of all

that know him, who understanding themselves bound to defend the reputation of their neighbour from slander, will not be wanting, as opportunity serves of acquitting themselves therein. In the meantime he may satisfy himself in having Plato's reserve, who being told of some who had defamed him, 'Tis no matter,' said he, 'I will live so that none shall believe him.'

Having vindicated his friend, he proceeds to champion his own native land. "As if it were not enough," he exclaims, "to slander particular persons; the Honour, Learning, Language, and Religion of a whole nation must be arraigned!" And after touching on the attacks on Scottish Presbyterianism, he concludes: "It were easy to be tart and severe on this occasion, but I shall leave it to the wisdom of authority in vindication of the Honour of Religion, a nobility famous for whatsoever is truly great and honourable, and a Ministry no less learned than pious, to chasten this excess of Insolence."

The work itself sets out with the observation that there are two opposite errors, which have an equal malignant influence on Religion: "The first is men's deluding themselves with an Imaginary romantic presence of Grace and Faith." "These men presume themselves into salvation, and claim happiness on the boldness of their belief: nor do they apply themselves to conquer heaven otherwise than in the alone virtue of their imagination. If they can but arrive at so much impudence as to vote themselves Saints, they think that they are acquitted from all care of virtue and obedience. These are the men who set virtue and grace at odds, who frame to themselves a religion not only empty of, but inconsistent with real goodness: the unhappy offspring of those whom the Apostle James encounters." The second error is "that some having obtained of themselves, endeavour to prevail with others to renounce and seclude all infused principles (commonly

called grace) with the subjective influences of the Spirit, and to erect in the room thereof acquired habits, natural dispositions, innate abilities and moral virtues as the whole of that in the strength of which we may live acceptably to God and acquire a fitness and title to immortality and life."

"The consideration," he declares, "of the inconsistency of these principles with truth, the affront offered to the Gospel, and damage done to the souls of men by each of them, has led me to this undertaking;" and the contention he maintains is, "that morality doth not comprehend the whole of practical Religion; nor doth all the obedience we owe to God consist in moral virtue."

The work exhibits much general information, and is replete with varied quotation, proving the writer to have been well acquainted with the Greek philosophers, the Latin poets, the works of the Schoolmen, and the Patristic theology.

He breaks a lance with Hobbes on the one side, and with the author of the "Ecclesiastical Polity" on the other. He defends the Nonconformists with energy, but with temper, from the charge of the Anglican divine, that the stress laid by them on the doctrines of Grace and Faith promoted hypocrisy and discounted good works and correctness of Life, challenging him to produce evidence of his propositions from either the writings or sermons of "sober Nonconformists." He alludes to Dr. Owen as "that great and incomparable man," and proves himself to have been no unworthy colleague of the eminent theologian. He presses Catullus and Persius into the service of religion; and, as an instance of the beautiful application of classical culture to theological argument, we may note a passage from Horace, which Mr. Gladstone once used with effect in the House of Commons to express the position of a disparaged Ministry. "The concreated beams of light," says the old divine, in words that suggest Wordsworth's Ode on Immortality, "are lost and vanished. There

remain none of these *Radii solis* or *lucida tela diei*. What the Poet says of dyed wool—

Nec amissos colores
Lana refert medicata fuco—

is applicable to the soul deprived of the image of God, and tintured with Sin and Lust." He often clinches his argument with an epigrammatic sentence, and we occasionally meet a quaint and striking original phrase, such as "the wonderful condescension of God in coming to terms of agreement with a puff of precarious breath and a little enlivened dust." He grapples fairly with his adversary, and in spite of the *odium theologicum*, while he strikes hard and at times with a playful consciousness of power, he utters no word open to the criticism passed on his opponent's diction as "ill becoming the extraction and civility of a gentleman, the education of a scholar, the morality of a philosopher, the religion of a Christian, and the profession of a divine." In his loftier passages he rises to a high level. For example, he thus compares the position of the Pagan and the Christian world in regard to matters of simple morality. "The declaration of our Duty is more clear as well as full. The Religion of Nature and precepts of Moral goodness are unfolded with more perspicuity and plenitude in the Scriptures than in any or all the writings of the philosophers. Moral virtues were never so established by the light of Reason as they are by the laws of the Gospel. Here is no crooked line, no impure mixture, nor vice obtruded for virtue. In a word, 'tis only the Bible that gives us a complete system of the laws of Nature, and therefore we who live under the dispensation of the Gospel have an advantage even of moral obedience ministered unto us, that the Pagan world never had. Our obedience is also endeared to us by nobler promises than the Pagan philosophers were ever made acquainted with; and these promises are attended with all the motives of

credibility. 'Tis likewise enforced under severer penalties than either Virgil or Homer in their romantick description of Tartarus ever dreamed of. Nor is there in all the Ethicks of the Grecians and Romans, such an inducement and incentive to practical obedience as the incarnation of the Son of God is; nor such a matchless pattern of universal virtue as the life of the ever blessed Jesus sets before us."

Two years later (in 1675) Ferguson published another work of the same nature, called "The Interest of Reason in Religion, with the Import and use of Scripture Metaphors, and the nature of the union betwixt Christ and Believers; (with reflections on several late writings, especially Mr. Sherlock's Discourse concerning the knowledge of Jesus Christ, etc.). Modestly enquired into and stated by Robert Ferguson."

The motto was from Tertullian (Apol. cap. 5), "*Nisi homini Deus placuerit, Deus non erit, homo jam Deo propitius esse debet*," and in his dedication to Thomas Papillon, Esq., the author says: "Sir, it cost me no long deliberation to whom I should direct these discourses, the obligations I am under to you and your family, rendering them yours by the Title of a just debt. The Interest you have in me by an entail of peculiar kindnesses, gives you a right to my studies and the Fruits of them. The declining the Imputation of Ingratitude is my plea for prefixing your name to these Papers." This Thomas Papillon, descended from a fugitive from the bloodier Bartholomew Day of the preceding century, was a few years later one of the Sheriffs of London, and a staunch adherent of the party which Shaftesbury led. He was a member of the jury that threw out the indictment against the Whig chief, and the substitution as Sheriffs of North and Rich for Papillon and Dubois marked the crisis in the fortunes of the Whig party that precipitated the stirring events in which Ferguson was to play so prominent a part. Papillon's wife

was a daughter of the proprietor of Godmarsham, and in this dedication Ferguson may be alluding to days of tranquillity forming a great contrast to those which were to follow.

“To the Reader” he says, “He that hath enrolled himself under the banner of Truth needs not make any apology for his coming into the field, when the cause in whose defence and service he is listed, calls for his appearance. Whoever consults either his name or his ease when an assault is made upon the Christian Faith deserves the punishment either of a coward in his profession or of a traitor to it. ’Tis not any personal provocation nor any pleasure I take in controversy, but merely a regard to the truths of the Gospel and the interest of the souls of men that hath engaged me in this undertaking. If there be not strength to be encountered in the opposition of our adversaries, yet there is petulancy, and that ought to be rebuked.”

Referring to some who “wear the livery of the Church of England,” he remarks, “Yet I do hereby no ways intend to list even those among them whose principles they have imbibed. Remembering what one said of the Milesians, that may be they were no fools, though they did the same things which fools are wont to do.” . . . “Nor am I without hope that I shall find the generality of those who are stiled Conformists, as well as those who are termed Nonconformists (notwithstanding their disciplinary controversies) candid and favourable. The things here contended for are the joint concernment of both; and the opinions opposed are inconsistent with, and destructive to the hitherto received doctrine of that party as well as this. If I receive no other fruit of this interposure, but the awakening others to more matured productions, I shall not repent my labour; the putting a common adversary to a stand till greater forces rally, being of some account, though the victory be reaped by other hands.”

It is, indeed, remarkable that, warm in his own opinions as he was, and combating doctrines put forward by a section of the Anglican clergy, he always speaks with great respect of the Church, and appeals to its authoritative standards. The book consists practically of three independent treatises. The aim of the first, "The Interest of Reason in Religion," was to vindicate the Nonconformists from misrepresentation of their doctrines, and from aspersions cast upon them, "as if they were defamers of reason, disclaiming it from all concern in religion," and deserving the reproach that Julian levelled against the primitive Christians. But the work is not merely a polemical pamphlet. It is a carefully reasoned defence of Revelation as in consonance with and supported by natural Reason. The author argues the necessity of a supernatural Revelation, the expediency of its being somewhere consigned to writing, the failure of all other claims but those of the Bible, and that subjective and objective evidences alike establish that the Scriptures are this supernatural Law. In support of the first contention he cites the oracles, the mysteries, and the divinations of the heathen world, and maintains that "the principle which they foolishly misapplied was genuine, natural, and true, namely that all religion was to be regulated by some divine discovery." He illustrates the third contention by destructive criticism of the Koran, and prefaces a detailed statement of the evidence for the Scriptures with the illustration, "That as we do not build our assurance of the world's being the manufacture of God upon every petty phenomenon, which like the image of Foam that Apelles struck upon his table by a hasty cast of his pencil, some, may be, look upon only as a disport of matter in the fortuitous encounters of one particle with another, but we raise our persuasion on the curious fabric of the nobler pieces, and the harmonious structure of the universal machine. In like manner, we are not so much to

seek for the evidences of the divinity of the Bible in every verse and chapter, as in the complex of the whole, and in the principal parts, branches and sections of it." While we are to distinguish "between what Scripture itself saith, and what is only said in Scripture," Reason, being of service to demonstrate the divinity of Scripture, at the same time imports its authority. The result of the argument is summed up in the words, "Herein lies our first duty, that our faith answer their credibility." But Reason, having established the Divine origin, has a further duty to perform in unfolding the full sense and meaning of the revealed Word. Some doctrines of the faith, it is argued, transcend Reason, and cannot be fully comprehended, but that is not because they are themselves obscure, but because human Reason is finite. And the third duty of Reason is to draw consequences from revealed truth. It was by argument that the Apostles addressed themselves to the Jews, and that the Saviour Himself proved the divinity of His Person, the authority of His office, and the resurrection of the dead. Indeed Reason is a specially powerful advocate in regard to those doctrines that are enforced by the facts of Nature, though "in the pulpit we ought not to serve ourselves too much from maxims of philosophy and principles of Reason." Illustrating his argument by the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and the certainty of Divine Providence, the author indulges in a characteristic parenthesis when referring to the contention of materialists of the day, that men have nothing but their animal inclinations to gratify, "and indeed the soul of a brute will very well serve all the ends that some men propound to themselves." He exhibits a very wide acquaintance with varied sources of recondite theology, and states the last duty of Reason to Religion as being to defend it from clamours and objections.

He then proceeds to delimit the bounds between the

spheres of Reason and Religion. Reason is the negative measure of Religion ; nothing contrary to it is to be admitted as a mystery of faith. But "all are not principles of Reason that this or that sort of men vote and receive for such." This he illustrates by a reference to various heresies, and their sources in the corruption of Christian truth by importations from the heathen philosophers, and specially joins issue with Descartes and his followers. His last position is that Reason is not the positive measure of things Divine. There are many doctrines of faith that, in its highest exaltation, it could not have discovered and cannot comprehend. In conclusion, he maintains that in developing these propositions he has discussed the whole Interest of Reason in Religion, and vindicated the sober Nonconformists from the calumny that no contradiction could stagger or astonish them. "And though," he adds, "I do not think it savours of over much modesty, that a few young theologues of the Church of England, (if indeed they be so) should monopolise to themselves the name of Rational Divines ; yet for my own part I neither envy them the title, nor have any quarrel with them upon that account, it being indeed their want of Reason that I find fault with. And as it hath generally been the unhappiness of others who have too much boasted of and relied upon Reason, to fall into the most irrational sentiments, so I do not see but that it is in a very great measure the misfortune of our new Rationalists."

The treatise on Scripture metaphors had a similar origin. It was called forth by the accusation that the Nonconformists dealt too freely in metaphors and enthusiastical expressions, and the conviction in the writer's mind that his opponents in denouncing some metaphors were undermining Scriptural truth. He examines the various figures of speech used in the Bible, and points out how much general knowledge is necessary to obtain the full force of many a Scriptural

passage. The civil law is instanced as throwing light upon the New Testament, and an acquaintance with Oriental philosophy and agriculture as adding new meaning to the old. After dealing with the nature of metaphors in general, and the expounding of Scriptural ones in particular, he considers their use in sermons and polemical writings. Even when advocating a sparing use of them in controversy, where logic and arguments are needed, he neatly illustrates the very thing that he condemns by remarking, "Feathers and Lace do not become a warrior so well as Buff and Steel;" and, dealing with the criticism that certain metaphors were unworthy of a religious treatise, he puts the answer very well in the offending figure—"Nor needs there any other apology for most of them but that the Sanctuary, as it is worthy of gold and precious stones, so it rejects not Goats' hair and Badgers' skins." He argues that the example of Scripture authorises the use of metaphors, and that the critics lose the full effect of many Scriptural passages by refusing to see their metaphorical meaning, while at the same time he convicts them of using the figure themselves, and even of giving metaphorical meaning to texts that should be read literally.

In the third treatise he enters the lists with Sherlock, in a discussion on the nature of the union of Christ with believers, in the course of which he deals with the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation. He compares Sherlock's logic to "that of Chrysippus, which men were too dull to understand, though they say the gods would have used it," and gives the following simple definition of the Church: "A Church being nothing else but a company of men owning the authority of Jesus Christ as Lord and King, and agreeing in the faith of such doctrines as He hath made salvation dependent upon."

This work was not allowed to go unanswered. William

Allen, vicar of Bridgewater, published "Animadversions on that part of 'The Interest of Reason' etc., which treats of Justification," and there also appeared in the same year "An account of Mr. Ferguson his common place-book, in two letters by Jos. Glanville and W. Sherlock." "The Interest of Reason in Religion" is the last of his theological works, and from henceforth politics rather than theology inspired his energies.

Two or three of the letters that found a resting-place in Government pigeon-holes seem to throw light on the period that had yet to elapse before he was finally launched on the sea of civil turmoil and hairbreadth escape. One of these is unique in its tone, for it presents the learned divine and daring conspirator in the character of a matrimonial match-maker. The gentleman whose interests he sought to further was apparently a Mr. Berry, and the lady, alluded to under a contraction that seems to be "Gr. Ow.," may have been a daughter or other relative of Dr. Owen. The Plotter was generally careful in dating his letters, and seems to have become more so, when the disappearance of one might be the first intimation of approaching danger. This consideration supports the internal evidence referring those that are undated to the earlier years of the correspondence. The first is in these terms:—

"MY OWN AND MY ALL,—Having issued our affair here, we direct our journey this morning for Shrewsbury. Though we be disappointed on the business we came about, yet I might declare our entertainment to have been free, generous, and full of respect. I am very sensible that Mr. B. misseth a wise and discreet young lady, but I hope the wise Disposer of all things to whom we had surrendered the conduct of this matter, will provide for him a person meet elsewhere. I know that she also might have been exceeding happy could she have brought her mind to a compliance, and yet I can not but

acknowledge her refusal to have been the result of judgment, for as it's not safe for a person of 19 to digest all his circumstances, so she alledgeth an incongruity in their humours which upon a serious compare I must subscribe to. Thou must needs think that besides the impressions of regret it hath on Mr. Berry, whereof I bear a part as sympathising with my friend, I am not without my particular disquiet, having been so eminently concerned in the first encouraging to it, and after managing of it. But I have this relief, that I was influenced by no one thing save the common interest of both, and yet I have acted under no but have endeavoured to approve myself with all sincerity both towards Gr. Ow. and Mr. B. If there have been any failures, they are attributable to my indiscretion, nor yet am I aware of any great imprudencies either. My dearest, thy circumstances, through my absence, do most sensibly affect me, and the miss of a letter this morning is no small affliction, but I will rather lay the disappointment anywhere than on thy forgetfulness. I am really uneasie till I see and embrace thee, which I hope may be this day sevensnight. Withdrawals of this nature give me leisure to think of my happiness in thee, and might serve to inflame love, if the height of mine could admit of any further degrees, which indeed it can not. Respects to the gentleman, and tell my children I love them and pray for them. I rest sure that my domestic affairs are in a good hand while superintended by so much prudence and faithfulness as thou possessest. My abode is like to be uncertain, that I know not how to advise thee to address thy letters, and I less know how to be a week without one. A line on Monday night may probably overtake me in Salop on Wednesday morning. However, should it miss me, it will light into a friend's hands. The Lord keep thee for him who placeth his all in this world in thee, and is entirely thine.

"R. FERGUSSON."

It may perhaps be that these references to a contemplated marriage are merely allusive expressions covering a deep political meaning, and that the journey into Shropshire here alluded to was undertaken to further the design of an insurrection against the Government. This might affect the date of the epistle, but the initials point to the simpler construction, and in any event it is no more possible now to determine, than it was then for the lawyers of the Crown to establish, the real meaning of the correspondence.

Among these earlier letters are one from Brill, and one from Amsterdam of 24th Oct. 1679, directed to Mrs. Robert Ferguson, at what was evidently their own home in Hatton Gardens. Three years later, when Ferguson had to flee with Lord Shaftesbury, the family circumstances seem to have been such that his wife and children had to accept the hospitality of friends, which was freely afforded by her relatives. Her own name appears to have been Hannah Brindley, and the Mr. Brindley, to whom several of her letters were directed, was evidently her brother. Such is apparent from a letter signed Elizabeth Brindley, from one who was either a sister or sister-in-law, fastened up along with one of her husband's of 1683, and the appearance of which, along with the five earlier letters from Ferguson himself, leads to the conclusion that the finding of the domestic correspondence among the State papers is the result not only of the actual interception of letters in course of transmission (which certain references would lead us to think had also really occurred), but also of the rifling of Mrs. Ferguson's own repositories by the officers of the law in one of the fruitless searches for her husband.

Elizabeth Brindley's letter, which is pinned to one of Ferguson's dated 24th May 1683, is addressed to "Mrs. Ferguson in Hatton Garden," and has no date. It throws some light on the troubles by which the wife of the conspira-

tor was surrounded, and, though written in a rather illegible hand, the following extracts illustrate the relations and modes of thought of their circle :—

“DEAR SISTER,—Yours I received with much joyfulness, and was refreshed to know I pray, deare sister, be trustful in the Lord, for I will assure you he hath been my support in time of trouble, so I will assure you he will defend against a storm. The storm is posting apace, and the way to the Throne lies by the Cross. The Lord keepe us to take up our cross and follow Christ. . . . If we should have our hopes in this life we are all miserable ; this is no continuing citty. The Lord is our refuge, our hiding-place in time of trouble. That is a very great support in Isaiah the forty-one 10 verse, Fear not, I am with thee, be not dismayed, I am thy God. . . . My deare sister, I beg of you and my brother you would be earnest with God for me at the throne of grace, that my faith fail not, for these are trying times. Deare sister I give many thanks for your noble entertainment when I was with you ; and if you and my brother and Hanna will come into the country to my poor habitation, you shall all be welcome to me. If my heart do not deceive me, I have a real love for the Brindleys. Dear sister, Mr. Evans presents his service to you and Bro. Deare sister, my humble respects and true love to you and Bro. and Hannah. I rest your sister to serve till death, ELI. BRINDLEY. Let me heare from you as often as you can. . . .”

This is a curious letter to be found in a Government office along with the correspondence of Leoline Jenkins, of Sunderland and Newcastle, with addresses to the Crown, and minutes on the office of a Lord of the Bedchamber.

It is strange that in the whole correspondence there is only one reference to Ferguson's own relatives, and this is of a nature to bear out the idea that there was an

estrangement between him and them, while he is always careful to send his respects to his friends.

A letter from Brill is addressed to "Mrs. Robert Ferguson, at his house in Hatton Garden, London." It has on it some notes in a woman's hand, and apparently the commencement of a letter on the blank sheet, probably written by Mrs. Ferguson or one of their children.

"MY MOST DEAR HEART,—Though I have very little time, yet I would redeem so much of it as to let thee know that through the goodness of God I am come safe to the Brill, where some from Amsterdam have met me. We had a good passage, though the wind was high, nor have I been sick all the voyage. All my solicitude is for thee, and if thou wilt but assure me of thy cheerfulness it will ease me of many perplexing thoughts during my abode here, and leave me at that freedom in transacting my business here which will be best both for me and thee. I can tell thee no more at present, save that I hope to be at Amsterdam to night, from whence you shall hear further by the first post. My service to all my friends, and tender love to my children, with all that I am to thyself, being, my dear heart, entirely thine

"R. FFERGUSON."

"BRILL, *Fryday*, 9 of ye clock."

The tenor of the next letter would seem to show that, in the autumn of 1679, residence in England had begun to have serious dangers.

"AMSTERDAM, *Oct. 29th*, 79.

"MY DEAR,—This is the fifth letter I have sent thee since I left Hatton Garden, and have not yet received one line. 'Tis some excuse that the letters dated at London this day sevensnight are not yet arrived. For all the packet boats being detained by distress of weather on this side, we want two posts. But if I miss a line by the first express I shall

be wonderfully uneasie. The news from England doth so much afflict me that I can receive no rest till I hear from thee. And according as the advice shall be I will either remove thee from thence, or return and suffer all hazards with thee. For our sorrows and comforts shall be common. But if it be the Lord's will that there should be a place of refuge for us, I pray thee not only bow to his sovereignty in it, but acknowledge his goodness. I abide in very good health, and exceedingly long to hear the like of thee and my children. I know not how to write to any friends, till I receive some information from thee, which shall be my measure both in my resolves here and my addresses thither. The God of grace and peace be with you, and give thee wisdom in the circumstances that thou art stayed in. Remember me to Hannah, etc.—I am, in the most sacred bonds, thine,
ROB. FFERGUSSON."

The following undated letter is also directed to Hatton Garden :—

"MY BEST BELOVED,—Thine of ye 24 I received, and as I am exceeding [glad] to hear from you, so it greatly afflicts me to learn that thou art not well. Nor shall I enjoy myself till I hear that thou enjoyest thy health. For I do assure thee that there is nothing in this world which I value in comparison of thee. And next to the serving the glory of God, and complying with his conduct, the putting myself into *some condition to promote thy comfort hath brought me hither*. Thou wilt see by my letter to Dr. Owen how warily I write, for I think I should be very indiscreet to desert service as well as a comfortable provision here, without some fixed way of employ as well as an established maintenance there. Pray learn of Mrs. Pool what I shall do with the packet of letters which she entrusted with me, and tell Mrs. Bell that if she be inclined to send over her son this winter,

I have provided for his settlement in a sober house, and with good company, at the rate 29 — 4 Aâ. And withal let her know that it is the chiefest season of the year for attending on public lectures. Pray inform me as well as thou art able how public affairs stand, for as things incline to settlement or distraction, it will be convenient to take my measures as to staying in this place or returning to England. Remember also to tell me how the children do, for thou forgottst it in thy last. I never better enjoyed my health, though it hath been both a wet season and a sickly time. Faile me not every post; the expense of a letter is nothing to the satisfaction and comfort of hearing from thee. My friends are so numerous to mention that I had rather express them all in general, than, by naming some, administer offence to the rest, as if they were forgot. And therefore bid my hearty service to all to whom it is kindly due. The God of peace give thee that peace which none can take from thee, and fill thee with joy through believing. —I am, my dearest, Thine alone, R. ff."

Christie mentions, in his "Life of Shaftesbury," that at a time previous to their flight to that country, Ferguson had preached in a Brownist church in Holland, and this may have been the "service and comfortable provision" to which he here refers. His presence there in 1679 seems to have been not unaffected by political reasons, and we must now return to trace the thread of his connection with public events, which, in the year that witnessed the first introduction of the names Whig and Tory, had entered on new and striking developments.

CHAPTER II.

1679-1682.

ACTIVITY AS A POLITICAL WRITER.

RARELY, perhaps, has popular excitement been greater, or party feeling run higher, than was the case in England in the year 1679. The closing days of the old year had seen the last of the Commons' House—more zealous for the Church than the bishops, and more devoted to monarchy than the King—which had done its part in ruling England since the Restoration, and was responsible for the odious Uniformity and Five Mile Acts. The new one met in a very different temper from that which had distinguished the heyday of its predecessor. The elections had been contested with the greatest vehemence, and for the first time it is recorded the victorious party resorted to the practice of splitting freeholds. The Whig party and faggot-voting came in together, and, strangely enough, the name Whig superseded another drawn from the future city of the caucus. For the party of Shaftesbury were originally called Birminghamers, from an inferior kind of groat in circulation there. Their policy soon gave them the designations of Exclusionists and Petitioners, but these yielded to the convenient monosyllable bestowed in derision by their opponents, as on the other side Abhorrrers and Tantivies were soon converted into Tories. Party names, and the new words *mob* and *sham*, which then enriched the vocabulary, were indications of the ferment in the minds of men. The

revelations and assertions of Titus Oates had stirred to white heat the anti-Papist feeling of the country; the mystery of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey's death had driven them home, and there was widespread alarm. Barristers in the Temple bought suits of silken armour, and honest burghers invested in Protestant flails. The Popish Plot was believed in as a dark reality by men who considered the events then taking place in southern France, the intense Romanism of the King's brother, and the relations between Charles and Louis, the general tenor of which was suspected, though their actual character was not known. In the midst of that troubled time appeared a pamphlet, in the form of a letter to the citizens of London, signed with the suggestive name of *Junius Brutus*, and entitled, "Appeal from the Country to the City for the preservation of His Majesty's person, liberty, property, and the Protestant religion." It bore as motto, "*Salus populi suprema lex*," and, though he did not own it himself, has generally been attributed to Robert Ferguson.

"As the city of London," it began, "is the great metropolis and soul of our once flourishing and glorious kingdom, so is it no small honour to you, the inhabitants thereof, to be citizens of so brave a city. Wherefore 'tis the hopes of the whole nation, that you have spirits and courage to act according to the character you bear, that upon all necessary occasions you may vindicate the just concerns of your city: in them we are all involved: with you we stand, and with you we fall: your example directs our conduct, and they who desire to lay you in ashes are the only persons who would subvert our Religion and Property: for when you are once ruined the next thing will be—Up, Ahab, and take possession."

The writer adjures the citizens to realise what they will see when Popery once more prevails, and in a few bold

touches draws a graphic picture of the supposed designs of the Popish plotters. He calls those to whom he speaks to ascend the Monument, and contemplate the city once more a prey to the flames, outrage and murder rampant in the streets, the guns of the Tower battering down the town, the martyr-fires of Smithfield relighted, and the churches given over to idolatrous superstition. "Your trading's bad, and in a manner lost already, but then the only commodity will be Fire and Sword." He asserts that "all that are either true Protestants, good Englishmen, or well-wishers to the interest of this nation" have reason to speak out, and gives the warning—"Let not fear of losing part by your action make you lose the whole by your patience." The King's death is hinted at as contemplated, and the contention advanced that in the case of a Popish successor no securities will be sufficient. The citizens are warned who are the enemies they have to fear. "They are young beggarly officers, courtiers, overhot Churchmen, and Papists." The Plot is descanted on as of old standing, and there is a hit at the King himself, which was, alas! too much of a home thrust: "I confess, when I think how faithful we have been to the French in all these late wars, as also how much service our English cannon (whereof we have too great plenty) did them at their siege of Valenciennes, I cannot but call to mind Commines' relation of King Louis XI. bribing our English Council." This introduces another story from Commines, to show "that when God designs the destruction of a king or people, he makes them deaf to all discoveries, be they never so obvious," and the author goes on to discuss the circumstances which disincline princes to give credence to reports of plots against them. These he classifies as—

1. Their being privy themselves to a part, but not the whole.

2. Clemency to their near relatives.

3. The nature of the evidence produced; and here he remarks with the graphic use of metaphor he frequently displays: "Notwithstanding we are now on a burning scent, we were fain here till of late to pick out by little and little all upon a cold scent, and that stained, too, by the tricks and malice of our enemies; so that had we not had some such good huntsmen as the right noble Earl of Shaftesbury and our late Secret Committee to manage the chase for us, our hounds must needs have been baffled and the game lost." The metaphor has a startling resemblance to the cynical phrase in which Shaftesbury is said to have expressed his own relation to the Popish Plot: "I will not say who started the game, but I am sure I had the full hunting of it."

4. The fourth reason is to be found in the nature and interest of the pretended conspirators, and the conclusion contains a passage which is noteworthy as, perhaps, the original "germ" of much that afterwards happened. The writer sums up first, the danger to the city itself, and secondly, he says, "The greatest danger accruing to your persons as well as to the whole kingdom, upon the King's untimely death, will proceed from a confusion and want of some eminent and interested person, whom you may trust to lead you up against a French and Popish army: for which purpose no person is fitter than his Grace the Duke of Monmouth, as well for quality, courage, and conduct, as for that his life depends upon the same bottom with yours. He will stand by you, and therefore ought you to stand by him. And remember the old rule is, *He who hath the worst Title ever makes the best King*, as being constrained by a gracious Government to supply what he wants in Title: That instead of '*God and my right*,' his motto may be '*God and my people*.'"

Appended were two extracts, headed respectively "Canons

which the Romish Church holds to the Ruin and Dishonour of Princes," and "More Romish Canons fitting to be considered by all Abbey-Landed men," the latter being the absolute prohibition and sanction of nullity attached by the laws of the Church to all diversion to secular uses of Church property.

In a period of such controversy, excitement, and apprehension, it is not difficult to imagine with what eagerness men would devour writings on the popular side marked by a style so incisive and a spirit so uncompromising. Nor is it hard to realise the wrath they would inspire in those against whom they were directed, and the readiness there would be to seize the earliest opportunity of crushing an adversary so formidable with his pen and bitter in his hostility. By this time Ferguson had thrown himself completely into the sphere of political agitation and intrigue, and was one of the most zealous and violent of the party which followed the lead of Shaftesbury, and set up the Duke of Monmouth as a rival to the Duke of York.

The experiences of the next few years won for him the sobriquet, which he retained and justified to the last, of "The Plotter;" and, whatever may have been the motives that influenced him, or the principles on which he regulated his conduct, he certainly proved himself one of the most versatile of conspirators. He was the director of the secret press from which the most violent pamphlets of the Whig party emanated; he disbursed the money which defrayed the expenses of many of their agents; and so obnoxious was he to the Government, that at one time he had different lodgings and places of concealment in various parts of London.

The venom with which hostile writers of the day refer to him is evidence that his untiring activity, fertile mind, and unconquerable perseverance were among the most potent forces which caused constant embarrassment to the Govern-

ment. When, in 1682, the second part of "Absalom and Achitophel" was published, the joint production of Dryden and Tate, Ferguson was the first individual to depict when Dryden took up the pen, and it is no doubtful tribute to his force of character that the great satirist should have considered him too formidable an opponent to be left to the care of Nahum Tate. His name is the first of those "priests without grace and poets without wit" whom the great master thought worthy of his steel, and on whom he let loose the fury of his invective :—

" Shall that false Hebronite escape our curse ?—
 Judas, that keeps the rebels' pension-purse ?
 Judas, that pays the treason-writer's fee ?
 Judas, that well deserves his namesake's tree ?
 Who at Jerusalem's own gate erects,
 His college for a nursery of sects,
 Young prophets with an early care secures,
 And with the dung of his own art manures ?
 What have the men of Hebron here to do ?
 What part in Israel's promised land have you ?"

The skill with which he avoided detection and baffled pursuit was as manifest as the thorough-going nature of his counsels, or the enthusiasm of his partisanship. He is described in the Dalrymple Memoirs as "Ferguson, a Scotchman and dissenting clergyman, remarkable for serving his party and saving himself in all plots;" and Scott, in a notice prefixed to "The Letter concerning the Black box," in his edition of Somers's Tracts, says: "Ferguson distributed most of the pamphlets written in the Whig party, and was by no means averse to father even the most dangerous of them."

In the "Process of Treason and Decreet of Forfaulture," which subsequently passed against him in the Scottish Parliament, he is described as "Mr. Robert Ferguson, sometime chaplain to the deceast Earl of Shaftesberrie," and his relations were intimate with both the Absalom and the

Achitophel of the great poem. Shaftesbury's disappointed ambition and fiery temper had by this time impelled him into those ill-advised courses, which ere long brought about his own exile and the ruin of his party, and counsellors, both misguided and misleading, had inflamed the ambition of the unfortunate Monmouth. The engaging manners, the handsome person, and the military fame of the King's son, who could not inherit, contrasted strangely with the stern and sullen character of his uncle; and the King, by the high alliance he had made for him, and the post of Captain-General which he had conferred upon him, had contributed largely to the capacity for mischief which he possessed. Indeed, the sincere affection which Charles, inconstant though he was in many ways, always cherished for the offspring of his first transgression, explains much that is perplexing in the history of the time, and at critical moments was probably of advantage to the political allies of "the Protestant Duke."

In the course of the year 1678 rumours had begun to float about, which ere long took more definite shape and persistency, about a certain "Black box," which had gone amissing, and was asserted to contain the proofs of King Charles's marriage to Lucy Walters, the mother of the Duke of Monmouth. So much comment did this occasion, that two separate declarations were made by the King to his Council on the matter, on the 6th of January and the 3d of March 1679. But the story held its ground; and, on the 26th of April 1680, the King called a meeting of the Privy Council, before which Sir Gilbert Gerrard, who was pointed at as a person in whose hands the black box had at one time been, was examined, and declared he had never seen any writings of the nature alleged—this examination being taken upon oath after the highest legal authorities had been consulted. Shortly afterwards, a pamphlet appeared which

created a great sensation. It was headed "A letter to a Person of Honour concerning the Black box," was by an anonymous hand, and was dated London, 15th May 1680. In the introduction prefixed to it in Somers's Tracts, the editor says: "Under this mysterious title, the reader will find one of the most bold and notable efforts that ever was made by any faction mentioned in history;" and, after noticing the circumstances in which it appeared, continues: "No more remains to be said by way of introduction to this remarkable piece, but this—That after the discovery of the Rye-house Plot, a paper was found in the custody of Mr. Charlton, one of the persons deepest concerned in the cabals of those times, which appears to be a printer's bill, and in which there are two articles for the charge of two impressions of the Black box, as it is there called: and that by the mention therein also made of Ferguson's name, it is reasonable to think that the said piece was the composition of that famous incendiary."

The pamphlet itself sets out with an announcement that it is the reply to a request for "some account of the foundation of that report, which hath arrived with you, concerning a black Box, and withal how Sir Gilbert Gerrard acquitted himself at his appearance before the King and Council in reference to that matter." . . . "As to the first," observes the anonymous author, "I must crave leave to distinguish between what is *material* in that business, and what is merely *circumstantial*, and serveth only by way of *parade*. . . . In truth, the whole enquiry referring to the Black box is a mere romance, purposely invented to *sham* and ridicule the business of the marriage, which had indeed no relation to it. For they who judged it conducive to their present interest to have the Duke of Monmouth's title to the Crown not only discredited but exposed, thought it necessary, instead of nakedly enquiring whether he be the King's

legitimate son, or only natural son, to bring upon the stage a circumstance no way annexed with it, supposing that this being found a fable, the Marriage itself of the King with the Duke's mother would have undergone the same censure. But by what I do perceive they were mistaken in their measures; seeing most men knew how to separate what they endeavoured so artificially to have interwoven. And all that I can apprehend they are like to get by it is the raising a devil they will not easily lay."

He contends that the people to whom he refers overreached themselves because:—

1. Their action was clearly attributable to the Duke of York, for others would have gone before the Parliament rather than the Council.

2. The very intimation of Monmouth's claim was calculated to produce a belief that it was not without reason.

3. The Council's Act was nothing without the Parliament.

4. The method was calculated "to intricate matters rather than clear them." For instead of a question as to the reality of the marriage, "all the mighty inquisition has been, whether this or that person has heard of a Black box, or of a contract referring to the King's marriage with that lady, committed to the keeping of Sir Gilbert Gerrard."

5. The worst witnesses had been called. All the best proof "seems to have been industriously waved."

6. Here the author rather diverges in his argument, and asserts that the point of apparency is of no great consequence, for the Parliament has often preferred one to the throne who was not the nearest heir.

7. The Council had done a better service if, "instead of attempting to establish the Duke of York as heir-apparent, they had examined whether, notwithstanding his affinity to the King, he had not by manifold treasons against the person

of His Majesty, as well as against the Government, forfeited his life to Justice, and made himself obnoxious to a scaffold while he is pretending to a throne. He is yet a subject, and accountable for the breach of the laws. . . . The countenancing the burning of London, the endeavouring to alter the limited monarchy into a despotic rule, and the combining with the Papists in all parts of the late plot, make him liable to the axe while he is aspiring to the sceptre."

8. "A more unaccountable thing yet than all the former is to see the King so far concern himself in having the succession declared and determined." And here the author commends the example of Queen Elizabeth, who would never name her successor, though often importuned by Parliaments to do so.

9. "Though the King's affirmative might be of some significancy towards the declaration of his legitimacy and corroboration of his right to the imperial crown of these realms, yet his negative imports just nothing, when confronted with positive evidence to the contrary."

10. Kings of England had formerly married private gentlewomen, the King was almost without hope of succeeding when the alleged marriage took place, and "I am sure neither of the Duchesses of York derived their descent from so eminent a pedigree, or of that figure of heraldry as the Duke of Monmouth's mother proceeded from."

He concludes by commenting upon Sir Gilbert Gerrard's declaration, pointing out that it did not touch the verity of the marriage, but was only, that "he knew of no such thing as a black box, nor anything relating to such a contract of marriage as he was then interrogated about." "Now, my Lord," is the close, "I know not how a gentleman could have carried it with more true courage and honour than Sir Gilbert did. For as the opinions of the Judges were to overrule him as to what was law, so only a Parliament is capable

of judging whether they acted consonantly to their duty, and till that happy hour come, I commend your Lordship to the Divine protection, and am, my Lord, your most humble servant."

The pamphlet produced an enormous effect, as indeed it was well fitted to do. For the style is remarkably vigorous and clear, and the writer has at command an array of historical facts to support his constitutional positions, and avails himself to the full of the two great popular prejudices of the time on which the Whig party hoped to ride to triumph, the dread of the Papists, and the unpopularity of the Duke of York. But his criticism is essentially destructive. It was easy to discount the negative testimony of Sir Gilbert Gerrard—it was quite a different thing to prove the marriage. And the pamphleteer shows great tact in arguing that the evidence in disproof should have been that of the King's companions beyond sea at the time when it was supposed to have taken place, and not of those who could only have heard of it by way of vulgar tattle. He has a strong point in the letter addressed to Mrs. Walters as "my wife" by the King, in Cromwell's time, and in the homage that was then paid to her by many of the Cavaliers. He treats the marriage with as much art as he attributes to the exploding of the evidence for it. For it is handled as if the general report were *prima facie* proof; and, while a conspiracy against the revelation is assumed, the author never commits himself to an absolute affirmance of the fact. He deals with it as one who had no doubt in his own mind as to circumstances of which the proof is defective would deal, and the pamphlet might have been written equally well by an enthusiastic believer in the story, by an honest doubter favourably disposed to its truth, or by a consummate tactician anxious to stamp and imprint the floating belief on the settled convictions of the populace. Ferguson seems to have written it without

consultation with others, and subsequently told a friend that the idea of doing so came into his head as he walked in the fields, and that he committed it to paper in an ale-house in Chancery Lane. The truth of the story was maintained by many whose judgment was as good as their neighbours'; it had not a few circumstances to substantiate it, and indeed, so late as immediately before starting on his fatal expedition, Monmouth told Sir Patrick Hume that he possessed proofs of his mother's marriage.

Party feeling ran high that year. On the 25th of the month ensuing that in which the pamphlet on the "Black box" appeared, Shaftesbury, having drawn the sword, threw away the scabbard, by presenting the Duke of York to the Grand Jury at Westminster as a Popish recusant. It was the session of the stormy debates over the Exclusion Bill; and in August, Monmouth made his famous progresses in the west, during which his popularity was made so manifest. But when the fury of the country party struck down its most eminent victim, Lord Stafford, the tide turned; and, although the new Parliament of 1681 met at Oxford in March in a spirit similar to that displayed by its predecessor, it was not long before its dissolution left the game in the hands of the Court. Before that time came, however, Robert Ferguson had again taken up the pen in defence of the Duke of Monmouth's claim. On 2d June, a month after his previous pamphlet, there had been published, by special command, a Royal Declaration, embodying the two previous ones, and solemnly asserting, "on the faith of a Christian and the word of a King," that Charles had never been married to Lucy Walters. This was proof positive that the arrow had not missed its mark, and the hand that had despatched it drew the bow again.

The new pamphlet which was dated June 10th, 1680, was headed—"A letter to a Person of Honour concerning the

King's disavowing his having been married to the Duke of Monmouth's mother." It was even more characteristic in its style than the former one, professes to be an "account of the sense of Thinking men about the Town" concerning the Declaration, and is not without the "wise saws and modern instances" of which the author had a plentiful store. He represents the King as acting altogether under the influence of the Duke of York, whose own conduct to Anne Hyde he alludes to, and in illustration he quotes "the story of a Scots nobleman to my Lord Burleigh, upon that wise statesman's desiring a character of King James, long before he ascended the English throne. 'If your Lordship,' said the blunt Scotsman, 'know a Jackanapes, you cannot but understand that if I have him in my hands I can make him bite you, whereas if you get him into your hands you may make him bite me.'"

Reverting to his former idea of the inexpediency on the King's part of naming his successor, he observes: "It's a pity that none would call to His Majesty's memory that saying of Tacitus, *Suspectus semper invisusque Dominanti qui proximus destinatur*, which, by varying a little from the Latin, I will English thus—'That he ought to be always suspected and carefully watched against by the Ruler, who most ardently hopes, and thinks himself in likelihood to succeed him.' Statesmen in old times reckoned it for a maxim in politics that *Ne mentio feret haeredis vivo adhuc Principe*, 'That while the Prince liveth there ought not be so much as a mentioning of any whose right it was to come after.' For, as subtle Tiberius upbraided Macro, that as he forsook the setting sun to worship the rising, so King Charles may have in time, if he have not already, cause to object the same to some about him."

"This Declaration," he observes again, "would be received with less hesitation in the minds of people if Kings and

Princes were not made of the same mould with other men, and liable to the like failures and moral prevarications that the rest of the sons of Adam are." After parading several circumstances in favour of the story of the marriage he remarks: "These are but few of the many particulars I could acquaint your Lordship with, relating to the confirmation of a marriage between the King and Mrs. Walters. But it is a piece of necessary wisdom, at this juncture, to know what not to say, as well as to understand what to say. And, to tell you plainly, I am more a servant and friend to my country, than, by pretending to plead the Duke's cause, and to be useful to the nation, to discover the witnesses which are in reserve, or to betray the further evidences which are to be produced, when this matter shall come before a competent judicature." *À propos* of the Royal Declaration, he comments upon the manner in which previous ones had been fulfilled, instancing in particular that dated from Breda before the Restoration: "That no man should be disquieted or called in question for differences in matter of religion, provided they did not disturb the peace of the kingdom. Now, though I will not dispute about the sense wherein this Declaration was meant, nor concerning the end for which it was calculated and framed, yet this I may be allowed to say, that there are a great many of His Majesty's liege people, who have tasted dealings directly repugnant unto it, and may justly complain of some failure in the accomplishment of it."

Dealing with the fact of the Declaration having been made on oath, he says: "It was a maxim of an ancient ruler, that, as children are to be cozened with nuts, so men are to be deluded with asseverations and oaths. And upon this occasion they call to mind the character fastened upon Charles IX. of France, namely, that the surest symptoms by which it was known when he spake falsely, was the

endeavouring to confirm what he said by the most dreadful imprecations and execrable oaths. . . . The King, poor gentleman, is willing to buy his peace at any rates, and hath here staked his honour, not to say his conscience, for it . . .

“ But how far the conscience of the King is concerned or defiled, I leave to those of the Theological Faculty to resolve : only I judge that the same casuistical divinity whereby they salved the conscience and vindicated the honour of the King in the case of the Covenant, and withal discharged him from the obligation which it was supposed to have put upon him, may, whensoever he thinks meet, stand him in good stead, and afford him the same relief in the case of the late Declaration.

“ There is one thing further, that must not be omitted, because it gives us amazement, and yet affords us pleasing diversion ; namely, the motive they have brought His Majesty to allege for his making and publishing this Declaration. I confess I could not read it without surprise and wonderful emotion. And I dare say, when you think seriously of it, you will find pity stir in your heart to your abused Prince, and your blood swell in your veins through indignation at some about him. For, after the care they have suffered him to take for preserving our religion, lives, and liberties from the designs of the Papists, by dissolving two Parliaments, and so often proroguing a third, they bring him now to publish this Declaration to relieve the minds of his living subjects from their fears, and to prevent the ill consequences which a belief of his having been married to the Duke of Monmouth’s mother may have in future times upon the peace of these kingdoms. A most proper way to extinguish our fears by doing all he can to subject us hereafter to one who is the professed enemy of our established religion and legal government.”

There then follows a prolonged attack on the Duke of York, and finally the suggestions:—

1. That Parliament should examine this affair; for “whatsoever declarations may otherwise signify, yet it is a principle which can never be obliterated out of the minds of Englishmen, that they are neither binding laws, nor can alienate or extinguish the rights of any; all, therefore, we desire, is that this matter may be impartially and fairly heard, and that too before those who alone have right to be judges of it.”

2. That the Duke of York be brought to trial “for his manifold treasons and conspiracies against the King and kingdom.”

Such is, to use Lord Macaulay’s expression, “the felicity and copiousness of Ferguson’s diction;” and one can easily imagine the sensation which would be produced in the heated atmosphere of the hour by publications so sarcastic in style, and breathing so little respect for “the divinity that doth hedge a king.”

The Catalogue of the Advocates’ Library, Edinburgh, attributes another letter of the year 1680 to him, but it has unfortunately disappeared. The document already adverted to as found on Mr. Charlton at the time of the Rye-House Plot, enables us to fill up the catalogue of his productions, and it is corroborated by his own list, in which the “Black Box” and the “Justification of the Black Box” head the political writings. The document (printed in the Appendix to Sprat’s “True Account”) runs thus:—

“WORTHY SIR,—The particulars underwritten are a brief account of what service was done since May the 15th, 1680, during which time six pound *per annum* hath been paid for rooms, most what for that service, besides wages to two servants amounting to upwards of ten pounds, which is not

all charged to the account. And all earned and charged on that account is but £56, 10s., for paper and print, viz. :—

	£	s.	d.
“The Black Box, First Impression, Paper and Print, number 1500,	05	00	00
“Second Impression, with Alterations, number 1500,	05	00	00
“The Answer to the Declaration, Three Sheets, number 3000, Paper and Print,	18	00	00
“The Two Conferences, Five Sheets, number 2500, Paper and Print,	25	00	00
“Reasons for the Indictment of the D. of Y., number 1000, Paper and Print,	02	10	00
“For Bags, Boxes, and Portridge,	01	00	00
Sum is,	56	10	00
Whereof received,	33	00	00
Remains,	23	10	00

Besides all the large premises when engaged in that service, viz., to be the Parliament Printer (and when the Parliament sat, had not one sheet to do of all the vast numbers done for them). Also £100 *per annum*, and reimbursement for an engine made on purpose for the service, which cost £15. A former, that cost £16, being rotted in the former publick service.

“Towards all which, eight guineas were received of Mr. Ferguson, said to be his own gift. This is a brief account of what past under Mr. Ferguson’s order, which shall be faithfully made appear to his face if he dare to stand the test.—By, Sir, your most humble Servant.”

Ferguson’s pen was busy in the months of fierce contest over the Exclusion Bill, and he names among his publications of that period several, the titles of which recall various phases of the struggle between the Court and the country party. “Reflections on Addresses” was a criticism on the loyal addresses with which the Tories counterbalanced the

petitions of the Whigs; and "Reflections on the Jesuits' speeches who suffered for the Plot," stimulated the passions of popular partisans. He also published a pamphlet called "Smith's Narrative," "A Vindication of Smith's Narrative," and "The Just and Modest Vindication in answer to King Charles's Declaration on his dissolving the English Parliament." Smith was one of the busybodies in the dark intrigues of plot and counterplot that are the most puzzling feature of the English politics of the day. The success of the Popish Plot of Oates led to the Meal Tub Plot of Dangerfield—a scheme to throw similar discredit on the leaders of the country party—and the subsequent intrigue which centres round the name of Fitz-Harris. So mysterious was the last that, when the Crown proceeded in the Courts against Fitz-Harris, the Commons resolved to impeach him. Papist though he was, the document for which he was chiefly accused was a violent attack on the King and Duke from an ultra-Protestant point of view, and it was believed that the real design was to attribute it to the Whig chiefs. The House of Lords threw out the impeachment, and left the trial to take place at common law. The Houses stood in sharp conflict, and the King cut the Gordian knot by dissolving the Oxford Parliament. By this action he got rid, for the second time, of the Exclusion Bill, which had just again passed the Commons, and cleared the ground for the future developments that were to drive Shaftesbury into exile, and break up the Whig party. Charles had been quick to see his advantage, and he at once published, on the 8th of April 1681, a Declaration to be read in churches, declaring the regret with which he had seen himself forced to dissolve the two last Parliaments "without more benefit to our people by the calling of them." It was an able defence of the Government policy, and declaring that "no irregularities in Parliaments shall ever make us out of love with Parlia-

ments," yet, recalling the troubles that preceded the Restoration, appealed successfully to the loyalty of large masses of the nation. To minimise the effect, Ferguson composed his "Just and Modest Vindication of the Proceedings of the Two Last Parliaments," which is called by Eachard "a celebrated piece," and ascribed to "the ingenious pen of Sir Wm. Jones." Horace Walpole says it was "first written by Algernon Sidney, but new drawn by Lord Chancellor Somers;" but Bishop Barlow notes that it was attributed to Ferguson. Oldmixon says that Sidney, Somers, and Jones each had a hand in it, and Burnet describes it as "the best paper that was published, writ with true spirit and judgment." It produced an answer from Edmund Bohun, and was republished in 1689, immediately after the Revolution. But the Plotter fathers it, and we can trace his hand. He declares that "the peers at Oxford were so totally ignorant of the Council, that they never once thought of a dissolution till they heard it pronounced; but the Duchess of Mazarine had better intelligence, and published the news at St. James's many hours before it was done." As to the Declaration, he says, "That tho' the King did not communicate this paper to the Council till Friday the 8th of April, yet Monsieur Barillon, the French Ambassador, read it over three days before, and demanded of a gentleman there his opinion of it." He hints at its being of French origin, and charges it with Gallicisms, "particularly that expression, 'That it was a matter extremely sensible to us,' a form of speech peculiar to the French, and unknown to any other nation." "No King of England before," he maintains, "ever spoke to his subjects but either personally in Parliament, or under the Broad Seal of England, whereas this Declaration was only signed by a Clerk of the Council, and therefore void of authority." He also expostulates, "That we have had ministers heretofore so bold as to accuse a pretended factious party in the

House, but never did any go so high as to represent the whole House of Commons as a faction, much less to cause them to be denounced so in all the churches of the kingdom, that so the people might look upon it as a kind of excommunication." So popular was the pamphlet, that it was republished under a fresh name, as "The design of enslaving England discovered, etc., being a new corrected impression of that excellent piece, entitled 'A Just and Modest Vindication.'"

The tide had now set strongly against the Whig party. An Oxford jury handed over Colledge, "the Protestant Joiner," to the executioner, and, on 2d July, Shaftesbury was sent to the Tower, and an indictment for high treason presented against him. The infamous tribe of witnesses, Dugdale and Turberville, and their less notorious following, were ready to do their part; but Shute and Pilkington, the Whig Sheriffs of the city, had done theirs also, and an Ignoramus jury, uninfluenced by the appearance of the first part of "Absalom and Achitophel," threw out the bill on the 24th of November. Shaftesbury's chaplain seems to have been, in a modified degree, his companion in adversity, for his name occurs—and in good company too—in the following list, dated 25th November :—

"The names of such Nonconformists who, being presented in the Attorney-General's name, are actually served with subpoenas, returnable on Monday last: John Collins, D.D.; John Owen, D.D.; Samuel Annesley, D.D.; Thomas Jacomb, D.D.; Thomas Watson, Matthew Meade, Robert Ferguson, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Doolittle, Samuel Slater, Nicholas Blackley."

Shaftesbury's career in Parliament was now closed, and he availed himself of his escape to plunge more vigorously into secret intrigues. He knew that, though the weapon had missed fire once, the fate of Lord Stafford might be his whenever a jury could be taken from others than Whig

partisans. And that depended on the tenure of office by the Whig Sheriffs of London. Once the Sheriffs were changed, the whole machinery that had been worked so relentlessly and violently against the Catholics might be turned in a moment on the huntsman who had cheered on the pack, and the late Lord President of the Council might experience the doom of Actæon. The public mind had already been prepared by rumours of a Presbyterian Plot, and it had formed the accusation against him. After his release there came out a pamphlet called, "No Protestant Plot, or the present pretended conspiracy of Protestants against the King and Government discovered to be a conspiracy of the Papists against the King and his Protestant subjects." It was followed up, in 1682, with a second part, and the same year there appeared, "The Third Part of No Protestant Plot, with observations upon the Bill of Indictment against the Earl of Shaftesbury, and a brief account of the case of the Earl of Argyle." This was written, "as 'twas vulgarly said, by Robert Ferguson, a Scot, by the appointment and consent of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury." Popular opinion attributed the first and second parts to Shaftesbury himself, but Ferguson in after years disclosed himself as the author of the whole. He deals very exhaustively with the case against Lord Shaftesbury, and shows a minute acquaintance with its details, as well as a wide knowledge of history, to support his argument. It was absurd to charge conspiring against the King on the Protestants, for their interest and hope was that he would outlive the Duke. It was incredible that Shaftesbury should have acquainted such informers with the design, if he had really cherished it. His connections of party and with the Nonconformists were large, yet "only a few fellows of no religion were in the cabal." Informers had always, in the Roman law and otherwise, been viewed with special disfavour, and the law treating

words as treason exposed "an honest man to the discretion of every knave that cometh into his company." In the third part, which extended to 150 pages, Ferguson begins with a dissertation on the past history of Popery, passes in review the Popish efforts and plots of Charles's reign, and, alluding to the sham plots of Roman and Venetian history, again exhaustively examines the evidence and the witnesses against the Whig chief. He maintains that the Grand Jury, instead of being accused for ignoring the bill, ought rather to be blamed for not indicting the witnesses, and, after dealing with the bond of association found among the Earl's papers, which was a strong point with the prosecution, ends a sarcastic reference to Sir Leoline Jenkins, who is represented as having contradicted himself, with the story of the priest to whom Ravallac confided in confession the terrible secret of his intended crime. When questioned on the subject, the priest replied, 'That among other mercies which God had bestowed on him, he had given him the gift of Forgetfulness.' Although he "will not usurp the French term lately naturalised, and call it chicanery," he maintains that the management of the trial was not marked by equity and impartiality, and ends the treatise with a narrative of the shameful perversion of justice that had been used in Scotland to ruin Argyle, as "a pattern of what our own case may be, if the counsels of a certain gentleman in the north do come to prevail." There is one touch that marks the author's familiarity with north country affairs, and also indicates his apostacy from the sentiments of his father's household; for he points out that one of the good things that had made the Earl of Argyle obnoxious to the Duke of York's party, was "his being able upon any occasion to check and bridle the Marquis of Huntly." Whether the contention of "No Protestant Plot" was just at the time these papers were issued or not, it certainly did not long remain

so; and the course of events brings us to the threshold of that involved and dark episode in the history of England, his conduct in which presents one of the two great problems of Ferguson's career.

Before we accompany him into its secret conclaves and perilous surroundings, there should be noticed a little incident that came out at Lord Shaftesbury's trial, and is found in the evidence of Bernard Dennis, one of the tribe of Irish witnesses. Dennis had been brought under Shaftesbury's notice, and had apparently indicated doubts of his own steadfastness as a Roman Catholic. He says that Mr. Colledge, after seeing Dr. Burnet, "brought me to one Mr. Ferguson, a minister, as I suppose, of the Presbyterian form, for he goes in their garb as near as I can tell, and Mr. Ferguson, at our first meeting, (which) was in Richard's Coffee-house, in an upper room, one pair of stairs; and Colledge, going to him, brought him aside, and spake to him concerning me, and he came to me apart, and discussed with me; from whence he brought me to a bookseller's shop, and bought for me the Articles of the Church of England; and in all these discourses there was a hand, as Colledge told me, of the Earl of Shaftesbury, who did procure him, and sent to Dr. Burnet to bring me that way." The whole story is strange, and the strangest part of it is that the Nonconformist spiritual guide should use as his handbook the Thirty-nine Articles.

CHAPTER III.

1682.

EARLIER STAGES OF THE PLOT.

IN June 1683 the Court and the country were startled by the revelation of a terrible danger menacing the Government, and even the life of the King. For years the air had been filled with rumours of plots, true and false, alleged by the Whigs against the Papists and by the Tories against the Whigs; and it is said that the Court party attempted to father no less than fifteen pretended conspiracies upon their opponents. When, therefore, a despicable drysalter went to the Secretary of State, and informed him that a serious and nefarious design was on foot, at first but scant credence was afforded him. "Wolf!" had been frequently cried, and the representative of Government did not at once realise that this time the fierce animal was really crouching for his spring. But the man was persistent, and soon brought corroboration of his testimony. When a little activity was displayed, the informers came in fast enough. High names were incriminated, and yet matters were alleged that pointed to the lowest villainy. The scope of the design widened, and the knowledge acquired indicated a far-reaching conspiracy. The Ministers hesitated to take the full responsibility of grappling with the situation, and the King was summoned in haste from the country to Whitehall.

It was indeed the case that a real and serious plot was in

existence to raise an insurrection in the kingdom, and that, concurrently with this, an inferior coterie of conspirators had contemplated a rapid way to the overturning of the existing order by the murder of the King and the Duke. The curtain had risen on events that were to furnish some of the most dramatic, touching, and shameful episodes in English history. The transactions disclosed were to bring to a bloody death some of the most honoured figures in the English realm, to involve in the same condemnation names still venerated in Scotland, and to lead by no long procession of causes to open war amid the lanes of western England and the glens and moors of western Scotland, to the horrors of the Bloody Assizes, and the "last sleep of Archibald, Earl of Argyle."

When the discovery of the schemes cherished among the opponents of Government was made, it was of course to be expected that the advocates for the prosecution, and Court historians, should make the most of the dark deed which some projected, and colour from it their views of the conduct of all, and the character of the whole conspiracy. Nor is it surprising that Whig writers, finding the design in favour of liberty stained with so deep a blot, should endeavour to rescue their heroes from its stigma at the expense of some of the less celebrated individuals, who did not condone their treason by the manner in which they met its penalty. And if there were one or two persons who formed the *medium* of communication between the two sections of conspirators; if there was one of these in particular, whose energy and resource were conspicuous among his associates, it would be but natural that he should receive the largest share of odium and obloquy. If, too, that individual's exertions had extorted the testimony of hostile witnesses, that, without the advantages that some possessed, he was one of the most dangerous of the plotters—described as "the main wheel of the

machine," this would be additional argument in favour of loading him with the full responsibility for the unpopular part of the conspiracy. In any case, the share of any individual in such transactions is a question of evidence and not of conjecture ; but such considerations are not irrelevant in approaching the examination of the evidence that exists.

Now there is no doubt that Robert Ferguson mainly conducted the communications between Monmouth, Russel, and those who acted with them, and the more ruthless coterie of conspirators. To which class must we assign the Earl of Shaftesbury ? But it is also certain—and it has not been so prominently noticed, by English historians at least—that he was also the main link between the English malcontents under the leadership of Russel and Sidney, and the party in Scotland who followed Argyle and Baillie of Jarviswoode, all names which have been reverently inscribed in the Whig *Acta Sanctorum*. As to the importance attached to his share in the whole conspiracy, there is not the shadow of a doubt. Historians of all complexions acknowledge it : it was more than once emphasised in the course of the trials that followed, both from the bar and the bench. The mention of his name brought a savage sneer at his profession from the brutal lips of Jeffreys : the Solicitor-General described him, in replying against Walcot, as "the most material man," "the only man in whom all persons had confidence." In supplementing the Solicitor's speech against Lord William Russel, Jeffreys pointed out that "Ferguson was the person he kept company with ; the reverend dean and the rest of the clergy of the Church of England they were not fit to be trusted with it, but this Independent parson Ferguson." In summing up against Algernon Sidney, as Lord Chief-Justice, he is again careful to bring in the name of "the ringleader of the conspiracy." In the Scottish trials, Sir George Mackenzie charged Jarviswoode with close correspondence "with

Ferguson the contriver, Shephard the thesaurer, and Carstares the chaplain of the conspiracy."

It was in the autumn of 1682 that the discontent and apprehensions of the Whig party first definitely settled into schemes of violent resistance. At various periods before there had been conversations between members of the party, and, according to Lord Grey, some of the leaders had meditated active measures. He records that after the Exclusion Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords in 1680, Lord Shaftesbury had first broached the subject; that the first time anything in the nature of an insurrection was "methodised" was when the King lay ill at Windsor, shortly before the meeting of the Oxford Parliament, and the accession of James loomed close at hand. It was later suggested that the leading Whig Lords should remain in London at the time of the Oxford Parliament, and the House of Commons adjourn from the loyal city to the Guildhall. But this idea had been abandoned, as another scheme of continuing to sit at Oxford in spite of the King, which Shaftesbury had meditated, was defeated by the suddenness of the dissolution, and the haste with which the Commons dispersed. After that, according to Lord Grey, "we were all very peaceably inclined" until the summer of 1682, when he learned that Shaftesbury and Argyle had been in communication, and the crisis of the Sheriffs' election arrived.

With these statements of Lord Grey, whose secret history was composed in the Tower after Monmouth's rebellion, and written to save his neck, the narrative of Ferguson is in substantial accord. He was not, of course, aware of schemes that might have been privately canvassed by Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Grey, and others of the Lords; but he tells that the efforts of the Court to engraft a Protestant Plot upon the Popish one first "alarmed many loyal and peaceable persons of all ranks and conditions." There followed several consulta-

tions "how to prevent their own ruin, and convey the Reformed religion and the rights of Englishmen down to their posterity;" and he gives a valuable analysis of the elements that made up the party of rebellion, and the jealousies that divided it. Neither in means nor ends could they agree, except as to the exclusion of the Duke of York, for "the old Republicans" hoped to manage matters to subvert the monarchy: there were even "diverse of most approved loyalty to the Crown in all former times, that were ready to fall into concurrence with them from a belief that they would be no longer safe under kingship;" and some only desired to make the King "change his conduct in particulars that had given the greatest disgust," dismiss his Ministers, and employ them instead. "This," says Ferguson, "was all that my Lord Shaftesbury pursued for many years, till the Court having endeavoured to destroy him upon forged crimes, he betook himself to other methods." He mentions two schemes fatal to the Court policy, which Shaftesbury's influence had prevented. The first was "to unravel and lay open" in Parliament all the miscarriages of the Government since the Restoration, and move for an adjournment of the House to the Guildhall, thus working on the fears of Charles by recalling the Long Parliament's conduct to his father. But this Shaftesbury rejected, as Ferguson shrewdly suspects, from a fear that several things might have been detected fatal to his own reputation, and the attainment of the chief Ministry, "to the compassing whereof all his actings at that conjuncture were specially designed." The second was a proposal to postpone the Exclusion Bill, and impeach the Judges, whose illegal proceedings on the bench were the most potent weapon of arbitrary power. But Lord Shaftesbury insisted on pressing on the Exclusion Bill, and a pretext for dissolution was afforded. Up to that time, however, there was no conspiracy on foot. The design of seizing the King

at Oxford, brought forward at Shaftesbury's trial, was a forgery of the Court, and the proceedings that followed spurred discontent into sedition. The trial and condemnation of Colledge, the "erecting an office of subornation for hiding villains to swear honest men out of their lives," as to which Ferguson says he can speak more positively, for two of the miscreants "acquainted him with the whole while it was transacting, and offered to detect the conspiracy that some were carrying on against Lord Shaftesbury and others," for a better price. He went to Shaftesbury, told him of what had occurred, and, while pressing him "not to treat with these fellows either directly or indirectly," entreated him to go immediately to the Council and demand justice. But Shaftesbury did not think the discretion of his opponents would allow them to use the means, and did not reckon on being sent to the Tower without being first taken before the King and Council. In these circumstances the injured considered that "all the obligations they stood under to the King were become dissolved," yet so long as the juries were with them they resolved to do nothing. Except "a little lavish talk," there were no efforts to overthrow the Government till the assault was made upon the charter of the City of London, and complaisant juries secured by "obtruding Sheriffs."

Such is Ferguson's account of the steps that led up to the conspiracy; he relates that, in the beginning of 1682, not only did messages pass between the Earl of Shaftesbury and the Earl of Argyle, but they had two meetings about concerting a joint rising in England and Scotland. Shaftesbury threw himself into the project with "all imaginable industry," and opened communications with all on whom he could rely. But between him and Argyle there was jealousy and reserve; Argyle required money to start the strife in Scotland, and an assurance that England would move at the same time, and the Englishmen were not ready—were "fonder of their money

than to part with it on the terms proposed by him," and saw that their failure to second him would free him from reproach in not applying it to the end in view. So, for the meantime, the design of an insurrection fell through. Only, however, to be soon resumed.

So far, the subsequent revelations of two of the actors bring us ; and we now reach a point at which light breaks in from many sources. A project on foot for founding a colony in Carolina, in which some of the Scottish Covenanters, the "wild western Whigs," who found their own country too hot to hold them, were to find a home, conveniently covered the bustle that attended the communications of the discontented, and specially favoured the connection with Scotland. Colonel Walcot was brought over from Ireland, on pretence of being Governor of the new colony, and Lord Shaftesbury asked, it is said, the royal permission to depart thither. Ferguson was active in connection with this project, and his abode in London was the rendezvous of many Scotsmen. It was observed that about him there flocked a society more various even than such a scheme of colonisation would account for. Highlanders, "Society men" or Camerouians, foreigners and sailors, were among his visitors ; and, by means of numerous Scottish pedlars, he could send news rapidly to the north. He told Colonel Rumsey in November "that he could promise for three hundred Scots in this town, that would be ready at a day's warning ; that there were in England twelve hundred that might be depended on ; that three or four hundred abode always in London, and the rest were scattered throughout England with packs on their backs : that a great many of them were gentlemen's sons, and all of them had been at Bothwell Bridge, and betook themselves to this way to get and carry intelligence, as well as a living." He made frequent journeys to Scotland himself, and would seem to have suddenly taken one of them immediately after the election of the

Sheriffs of the City, on Midsummer Day of 1682, when, by the Lord Mayor's revival of an ancient custom that gave him the nomination of one, and the dispute and confusion that followed, the Whig candidates, Papillon and Dubois, were defeated. Probably Ferguson's journey was connected with some political movement which the turn of events had hastened; for the confirmation of the Tory triumph at the ensuing Michaelmas precipitated Lord Shaftesbury's action. Be that as it may, the evidence of the journey also enables us to estimate the space which thus early the traveller had acquired in the popular mind, for it is a broadsheet containing a piece of doggerel satire headed "*Iter Boreale, or Esq. Sparepenney's departure to the north, July 3rd, 1682.*"

Seizing on the signature of the "Appeal from the Country to the City," it begins:—

"After long-practised malice in the South,
Brutus, the people's ear, the people's mouth,
 At length most prudently has sallied forth,
 And cautiously retired to his North.
 His poison he has left behind in London,
 By whose infection Whig-land's chiefs are undone.
 Charter lyes bleeding, Orphans' joyned cries
 Reach Heaven while the guilty causer flies;
 Whole Corporation suffers for believing
 Sneaksby, who but a garret had to live in,
 Yet, had he had his arbitrary swing,
 Would all our nobles to his ninepence bring,
 Would curtail monarchs, and by grand debate,
 Reduce Great Britain to an Hamburgh State—
 For Eighty-two should be as Forty-eight."

After describing at some length the misfortunes which had overtaken the Whigs, the lampoon concludes:—

"'Tis time, high time, to quit that hated place,
 Where nought but Loyal must dare shew its face,
 So fiends, Associate-wizards still forsake,
 Cajoled with hopes until they come to stake.
 Thus inmate rats, who first perceive the flaw,
 In ruinous buildings prudently withdraw,
 HE smells Whig-Babel's fall, and parting seems to say
 'Perish ye, with your cause, so I be out o' the way.'"

One of the elected Sheriffs resigned, and consequently there was a new election in September, at which the Tories were again successful, and the swearing in the new Sheriffs and Lord Mayor, on 30th September 1682, marked a crisis in the fortunes of parties. "The very same night," the Earl of Shaftesbury quitted his mansion, in Aldersgate Street, and hid himself in the City, where "Ferguson and others, his complices, daily frequenting him," he endeavoured with all his energy to initiate a revolution.

But some of Lord Shaftesbury's political allies were not ready to move so fast. He was the central figure for the time in a congeries of cabals, but some of his confederates looked askance on others; and his own past career had not been such as to secure him the trust and confidence of all who were prepared generally to act with him. Some of the great figures of the Whig party could not forget that he had been the associate of Lauderdale and Arlington, and for long the ready instrument of the Court. Monmouth and Russel recognised his abilities, but distrusted his judgment. They knew the ambition that possessed him, and his fierce "impatience of disgrace." There is much in the character of Shaftesbury, as depicted by the glowing pen of Dryden, that calls up the vision of another statesman, resolved "to ruin or to rule the State," and equally ready "the triple bond to break," in order to compass it. And Lord William Russel stood to Achitophel somewhat in the relation that the heir of another Whig house was to occupy to Shaftesbury's successor of two centuries later. If Lord Grey's story be correct, Shaftesbury had urged the necessity of a rising upon the Duke of Monmouth, Lord William Russel, Sir Thomas Armstrong, and himself, immediately after the election of the Sheriffs in July. Many meetings of these noblemen had followed: Shaftesbury and Russel had agreed to sound the leading men of London; Lord Russel was to communicate with Sir

William Courtney and the gentry of the west; and the Duke of Monmouth to make a progress in Cheshire, and consult with Lord Delamere (then Lord Brandon Gerard), Lord Macclesfield, and Mr. Booth. To Grey was committed the charge of Essex, but he declined it on the ground that there were not five persons there whom he could trust. Early in September Monmouth went to Cheshire, where he was received with acclamation, attended by bands of mounted Cavaliers, and carried himself with the air of a prince, touching for the king's-evil, driving in almost royal state, yet omitting nothing that could increase his popularity with the general population. So disquieting were his proceedings to the Court, that a messenger was sent down in haste to arrest him at Stafford, and bring him to London to answer for disturbing the public peace. Sir Thomas Armstrong at once hastened to London to obtain a writ of *Habeas Corpus*, and communicate with Shaftesbury, Russel, and Grey. Shaftesbury's advice was that Monmouth should at once return to Cheshire and raise the standard of rebellion; but Lord Russel declared that the west was not ready, and the basis and end of so serious an undertaking had not been formulated. Lord Grey was to convey the result of their consultation to Monmouth at St. Albans, and he afterwards declared that Shaftesbury privately urged him "to cheat the Duke of Monmouth this time," and tell him that the advice of all his friends was to rise. But Grey would not take so grave a responsibility: he reported the different opinions that prevailed; and the Duke came on to London, where he was met by the joyful acclamations of the crowd, bound over to keep the peace, and soon restored to liberty. Shaftesbury subsequently told him of the secret advice he had sent, and again pressed for a speedy insurrection, declaring that preparations had been made in London which could not be concealed, and that he had 10,000 men ready

to rise. When Monmouth declined to commit himself, and rallied him on his "invisible army," Shaftesbury's passion rose, and they parted on terms that boded ill for united action. So stood affairs when the final settlement of the Sheriffs drove the haughty statesman into hiding.

The result of the caution with which his proposals had been received was not to moderate, but to increase Lord Shaftesbury's activity. He turned to less worthy instruments, and to courses more extreme. The connection in the City which he had cultivated was sedulously worked; he looked for soldiers to the apprentices of London, and for valuable reinforcement to the large seafaring population of Wapping. There the Whig interest was strong, and it was a favourite hiding-place for those who meditated escape to Holland. He declared, "that since it was plain their liberties were not to be secured but under a Commonwealth, he alone with his interest would attempt the deliverance of his country. If the rest of the Lords would concur with him they might share in the glory; else he hoped he should be able to effect the work without them, by the aid of an honest brisk party in the city." He cherished the suspicion that there was a secret understanding between Monmouth and the King; and never forgave him for throwing away, when in Cheshire, the third great opportunity that had opened to him. He threw himself wholly into the arms of the Republicans, and declared to Lord Howard that any other design but a Commonwealth "would not go down with my people now." His determination to act forced the hands of Monmouth and his associates; and, knowing that they would be involved in the result, they resolved to co-operate in the attempt. But, though various efforts were made to bring the two chiefs together—though Lord Howard of Escrick acted as intermediary, and Ferguson exerted all his energy—the deep-rooted distrust could not be overcome.

Shaftesbury had indeed turned his attention to a project devised by the darker spirits of the party, the success of which would not only have cut him loose from Monmouth, but irrevocably blasted the Duke's future career. The failure of the negotiations with Argyle, the indisposition on the part of the great peers to rise, and the feeling that something was bound to transpire of what had been canvassed, and supply the Court with the occasion for exerting the machinery they were now provided with, had inspired a section in London, composed of the old zealots of the Commonwealth, and ambitious men of no principle, to contemplate action that could be carried out by a few desperate men. If a rising was to be made by limited numbers, and a single section, it must be heralded by a stunning blow. So the Assassination Plot came into existence. Like the scheme of the insurrection, though not discovered for months to come, it had two separate and distinct periods of vitality. The details that were unfolded concerning it chiefly relate to the second of these periods, in the early part of 1683; but the information recovered, and the narratives published, show conclusively that it had been previously cherished, and that on both occasions the main features of its accomplishment were to have been the same. But it would seem that in October 1682 it was favoured by men of higher rank than in March 1683.

It was the custom of the King to go down twice a year to Newmarket, and spend some time there. The road by which he generally travelled passed a mansion called the Rye-House, in Hertfordshire, belonging to Colonel Rumbold, an old soldier who had served under Fairfax, and married the widow of a rich brewer, whose business he now carried on. In the Parliamentary campaigns Rumbold had lost one of his eyes, and the fact won for him among his associates the designation of Hannibal. He was a stern Republican,

trained in a merciless school, but a man of greater honesty than his confederates, who acted courageously throughout, and ultimately met his fate with fortitude. In those days the Rye-House was a place of some military strength, and commanded a by-road which saved the royal party a considerable detour in passing from London to Newmarket. The house was strong, and had a tower from which an outlook could be kept; it stood in the corner of a garden, the walls of which were loopholed on the side parallel to the road. House and garden were surrounded by a moat, and the only access was by a bridge underneath the tower. Beyond the bridge, on the Newmarket side, were an outer courtyard and some outbuildings, one of them a row of stables, forming practically a prolongation of the garden wall, and commanding the road where it made a narrow passage between a thick hedge and ditch and a little paling in front of the stables. On the London side, immediately after clearing the garden wall and the moat, the road crossed the Ware river, at right angles, by a bridge. There was therefore considerable facility for collecting and accommodating a body of mounted men in the Rye-House and its enclosures—a defile narrow at both ends, and well suited for a military ambushade, and a fortification where brave men might defend themselves for a while with success.

The plan that commended itself to the unscrupulous section of the malcontents was that a band of horsemen, under the leadership of Rumbold, should ensconce themselves in the Rye-House; that, when the royal *cortège* was entangled in the defile, the exit should be blocked by overturning a cart; that the horsemen should sally out, engage the guards, and slaughter the King and the Duke in the *mêlée*. As Macaulay has observed, some of those who engaged in the scheme had a strange sensitiveness on the

point of honour. Colonel Walcot was ready to lead the assault on the guards, but would have no share in the butchery to accomplish which the attack was designed. He, indeed, was not brought to consent even to this subsidiary share until the following spring, although West said at his trial that he told him the original assassination scheme was one of Lord Shaftesbury's designs. Those undoubtedly subsequently most deeply implicated in the scheme were West, a barrister of the Temple, of atheistical opinions, scant personal courage, and pronounced Republican views; Colonel Rumsey, who had served as a soldier of fortune in Portugal, and subsequently married a lady of fortune in Britain, but a man little respected by those who knew him, and at this time used by Lord Shaftesbury as a tool, and, as some thought, a spy; and Richard Goodenough, who had been an Under-Sheriff of London under the Whigs, and particularly skilled in selecting Whig partisans as jurymen. West afterwards declared that he had heard from Ferguson that Goodenough received money from Lord Shaftesbury to further the assassination project in the autumn, but appropriated it to himself, knowing that no inquiries could be made on the subject.

It is a little difficult to extricate the evidence of the assassination plot from that relating to the general insurrection, and the stories of West and Rumsey, who both turned informers, will require careful examination. But before summarising Ferguson's account in his manuscript of his share in this transaction in the autumn, it is desirable to note the other evidence in regard to it. West's account, when engaged in the process of shifting the blame and hanging other men to save himself, was that he understood from Captain Walcot that "Mr. Ferguson had the management and conduct of the assassination in October." West met Ferguson, who, he says, "treated me, as he always did, with a long

story of the miseries of Scotland, and that the people were all in slavery and bondage, and would be so here if they did not free themselves. And says he, 'There are two ways thought upon for it: one is by a general insurrection, and that is gone off; the other is a much more compendious way, by killing the King and the Duke of York.' He replied that an insurrection was dangerous, and would at best entail a long war, and declares that Ferguson answered that "the other was the best way." He asserts that Ferguson and one or two others met frequently at his chambers, and Ferguson proposed several ways of doing it: by means of swordsmen in St. James's Park; by attacking the King on the way to the Lord Mayor's feast in St. Paul's Churchyard or Ludgate; by running down the royal barge on the river with a hoy, and, if necessary, driving a hole in one of her beams with a blunderbuss; by lodging forty or fifty armed ruffians in the playhouse, and by men posted within the rails of Covent Garden, and under the piazza of Covent Garden Church porch. These proposals, he says, were made "after the design of October had miscarried;" and also mentions having asked Ferguson whether the Duke of Monmouth were acquainted with the design, and what security they could have that he would not hang them all, to which the reply was, "What if I get it under his hand that he shall not?"

Carstares, in the course of his examination deponed to a conversation with Ferguson in Cheapside, in October or November, in which Ferguson said, "That for the saving of innocent blood it would be necessary to cut off a few, insinuating the King and the Duke." But Carstares could not be positive whether he named them or not, and replied, "That's work for our wild people in Scotland," and never had any further discourse on that matter, though Ferguson and he communicated as to the general insurrection.

Lord Howard of Escrick, who changed colour on learning

that West had become evidence for the Crown, and promptly followed his example, mentions having heard "dark hints from Captain Walcot, Goodenough, West, and Ferguson, of shortening the work by removing two persons," from which he understood there was to be an attempt on the King and Duke, but where, when, and how acted he never knew.

From Walcot, Lord Howard heard in October that there was to be a rising, and "that a smart party might possibly meet with some great men." He told the Duke of Monmouth that there might be an attempt on the King, and the Duke replied, "God so, I will never suffer that." "Then," said Lord Howard, "he went to the playhouse to find Sir Thomas Armstrong, and send him up and down the city to put it off, as they did formerly." On the night of the King's return from Newmarket, the Duke, Lord Grey, and he dined together, and "had a notion conveyed among us that some bold action would be done that day." They concluded it must be an attempt on the King, and Lord Grey said, "By God, if they attempt any such thing, they can't fail." "We were," said Lord Howard, "in great anxiety of mind till we heard the King's coach was come in, and, Sir Thomas Armstrong not being there, we apprehended that he was to be one of the party, for he was not there." The Duke told Lord Howard a day or two later that he had his horses in London ready to mount on any emergency.

Ferguson's manuscript throws most valuable light on the suspicions of Lord Howard, who was not admitted into the most intimate confidence of the chiefs of the party, and upon the relation of those chiefs to each other. It exhibits clearly and directly the different aims and interests involved, and the unsuspected cause by which the design in October miscarried. It lifts the veil that covered the most secret recesses of the conspiracy, and defied the penetration of the lawyers of the Crown. The facts which it adds to our know-

ledge of this period of the conspiracy may be thus summarised.

The distrust that Shaftesbury had conceived of Monmouth induced him to disparage the Duke to others, and thus led to the original scheme of the assassination. To the Republicans the scheme had a special recommendation, for it seemed to foreclose the restoration of the monarchy under a popular Prince. It had been some time in progress before Ferguson heard of it, and would have been concealed from him had it been possible to keep it secret from one whose relations with the various sections of the Whigs were so numerous and close; for he was known to be "not only exceedingly attached to the Duke's person and interest, but an avowed defender of a limited and regular monarchy, as the alone form of government agreeable to the laws, ballance, and genius of England." It was from mentioning what he had heard from "some of the little impolitick people" to "greater and more reserved persons," that he first received information which satisfied and at the same time bound him to silence. His first reliable informant was probably Major Wildman, for he answers to the description Ferguson gives; was a Republican, and in Holland between the expeditions of Monmouth and William, where and when the narrative seems to have been written. The informant, says the writer, "is at present at Amsterdam." He not inaptly described the King and the Duke as "stags that would not be impaled, but leapt over all the fences which the care and wisdom of the authors of the constitution had made to restrain them from committing spoils." Ferguson, "knowing the temper of the person with whom he had to deal," cautiously replied that he thought it easier to represent our maladies than to find a cure for them, and that wise men must be careful that the remedy should not increase the disease. He, however, at once set himself to find out whether the design was confined

to "the old Commonwealth's men," and went to Lord Shaftesbury, to whom he "had always ready access," and represented to him the fatal consequences of his misunderstanding with Monmouth, the only man qualified to lead the people. Shaftesbury replied that he could not commit his life, his fortune, or his party to the Duke, and the close attachment of Lord Russel and others to Monmouth had "made him think of a more compendious way of redeeming the nation than that of an insurrection." Speaking highly of Ferguson's past services to him, and saying there was none in whom he could repose more confidence, he declared he "was resolved to try whether it was not possible to deliver the nation by a few, seeing there was no hope of effecting it by united counsels and a combined strength," and there was imminent danger from the entry of North and Rich on their duties as Sheriffs. Ferguson defended the Duke of Monmouth, but assured Shaftesbury that he valued no man but in subserviency unto, as well as consistency with, the preservation of religion, the rights of mankind, and the laws and liberties of his country." If Monmouth were so criminal as the Earl alleged, he would turn against him, and though things might be proposed which he could not approve, he would betray no man.

But from that time he carefully scrutinised the demeanour of Monmouth and those about him, to see whether there was ground for the "jealousies that some were industriously striving to beget of him in the minds of men." By conversation with Monmouth, by "research among those of unquestionable honour and integrity, who knew his whole conduct," and by careful observation, Ferguson was convinced that there was no cause for the reproaches, and that Monmouth's coolness proceeded from reluctance to "expose the cause to miscarriage and the party to ruin." He became his zealous advocate, and soon had an opportunity of unrestrained conversation with Lord Shaftesbury, who stayed for a

week at Ferguson's house. This convinced him that what Shaftesbury said was intended to undermine the Duke's reputation, animated partly by "a disgust of monarchy, of which he was grown weary," and partly by an apprehension that relief in time could not be got by an insurrection. He had persuaded himself that few men and a little money would be needed to end things by an attack on the King and Duke, and thought it necessary to deprive Monmouth of the power to punish the crime.

Ferguson made another attempt to influence Lord Shaftesbury. He prevailed on him to meet his own cousin, Mr. Charlton, who was a friend of Monmouth, but "they parted worse friends than they came together." He had now discovered more of the assassination scheme, and thought himself obliged, both by "sincere regard to the public cause" and "the unfeigned love he bare to the person and interest of the Duke of Monmouth," to go to the Duke, and tell him of the design that was being carried on. He impressed on him that the only way to hinder it was by a speedy insurrection, that he must beware lest those concerned in it should make assurance doubly sure by destroying himself, and that he must be ready to "obviate whatsoever the enemies of the monarchy might promise themselves in case it succeeded." The Duke expressed his detestation, and required Ferguson, as a testimony of friendship to him in a matter so closely touching his duty and honour, his interest and safety, to penetrate into and superintend all the steps in the design, and do all in his power to prevent it. Ferguson replied that he asked him to play a part in which it was hard for any man to behave himself at the same time wisely and honestly, and almost impossible to execute without departing from the simplicity and honesty he wished to exercise at all times and to all persons. He pointed out that Monmouth exacted that of his faithfulness in which he could give him no

security ; that it exposed him to a fearful risk if the plot were betrayed by treachery, and to the peril of assassination at the hands of the desperadoes engaged in it if they suspected him of hindering their success. If it were executed in spite of him, he would incur the hatred of Monmouth himself. But he offered to do his best, insisting, however, that Monmouth should name two persons to advise with him and be witnesses of his fidelity. Monmouth at once agreed, and named Sir Thomas Armstrong for one, saying he would fix on another after consulting with him. He did so, but Ferguson does not name the other, because "he is still living, and might be exposed to the revenge of those whose projections he concurred to disappoint, as he is already to the wrath and pursuits of the Court." He was, however, a person of known worth and honour, and always a member of the Church of England. Ferguson never could discover whether "Lord Russel had any intelligence of it, though he was the only person of quality whom the Duke seemed most to confide in."

By the time Ferguson, Sir Thomas Armstrong,¹ and the other friend, who may perhaps have been Mr. Charlton, could meet and consult, the King had gone to Newmarket, and the assassins were hastening to be ready for his return. Those who had determined to counteract them resolved to work by four methods, and fixed on Ferguson to take the active part, as best qualified to do so, and most likely to escape retaliation from his large interest among that party. The first step was to set on foot and carry on consultations for a general insurrection, and hold out the hope of deliverance that way ; the second, to reason with those who were open to reason, that though many would rejoice at the crime, no one dared protect the criminals from punishment ; the third, to show that, if they succeeded in the murder, they were not strong enough to defend themselves against those who would revenge

it; and the fourth, to get possession of the money collected to provide horses and arms, delay the disposal of it till the King had returned, and afterwards repay it,—“which,” says Ferguson, “as I carefully and faithfully did, so by that means, in conjunction with the former, I found small difficulty in stifling and diverting what was to have been executed upon the King and the Duke of York, as they were to return from Newmarket in October 1682.” “In justice to the memory of Mr. Rumbold,” he records that he calmly listened to what he urged to him, and indeed suggested some considerations as to the unfavourable results that might follow. But in case something might have escaped him, Ferguson “told Sir Thomas Armstrong how necessary it was for the Duke of Monmouth not only to be in the City on the day when the King was to return, but to be ready (in such a case) to mount, both [to] the securing himself, and in order to assert the rights and liberties of the people. Which, under pretence of dining with a company of gentlemen, he accordingly was, and upon whom Sir Thomas Armstrong all that day attended contrary to what my Lord Howard falsely fastens upon him, as if he had not been to be found till after the King’s coaches were come into town, and whom he thereupon villainously asperses by saying that he verily believes that Sir Thomas was to have headed the party that was to have set upon and destroyed the King.”

CHAPTER IV.

1682-83.

CONSPIRACY AND EXILE.

THE Assassination Plot having miscarried, and the King returned in safety from Newmarket, all sections of the Whigs set themselves again to promote an open rising in arms. The Duke of Monmouth was influenced by the hope of preventing a renewal of the assassination project, by apprehension of what might occur if the plotters saw themselves simply deluded by promises of other efforts, and by the fear that information might reach the Court which would imperil all. The Earl of Shaftesbury, while retaining his old opinion of Monmouth and refusing to meet him, was anxious to animate him and his friends to action, since the other scheme had missed fire. Various delays occurred. At one time it was advisable to wait for news from the counties: then Queen Elizabeth's birthday was fixed for the rising, but again rejected, because on that day the Guards were sure to be under arms; and finally the 19th of November was chosen. This happened to be a Sunday, and when some one noticed the fact, Ferguson is said to have replied "that the sanctity of the day was suited to the sanctity of the work," or, according to another version of the words, "We have a proverb in Scotland, *The better the day, the better the deed.*" Shaftesbury, still remaining concealed, sent repeated messages to the other Lords, who held meetings to discuss all the steps to be taken, some of them even going in person to view the

posts of the household troops which they intended to surprise.

In the end of October, or the beginning of November, an important meeting was held at the house of Mr. Thomas Shephard, a wealthy wine-merchant in Abchurch Lane. It was a fatal one for some of those who were present, for the one man who attended uninvited turned traitor, and the host became evidence for the Crown. That meeting alone cost Lord William Russel his head; it formed the *gravamen* of the charge against Sir Thomas Armstrong, and it did to death Alderman Cornish, who appears to have casually arrived in the course of the discussion. The path on which it was one of the first steps led Monmouth to the block; Ferguson and Lord Grey alone escaped, after many perils and vicissitudes. What really took place is shrouded in some mystery, for it is impossible to reconcile Rumsey with himself. He told one story at the trial of Lord William Russel, and another at that of Alderman Cornish. He was positive he only remained at Shephard's for quarter of an hour, yet he crowds into that quarter what an hour would not hold. The explanation seems to be that Rumsey was partly fabricating and partly confusing two separate occasions, that the accused had no counsel, and dates were not rightly cleared up. For Shephard and Lord Grey say there were two meetings, and Rumsey does not deny that he was at both. He speaks distinctly to what occurred at the last, and at the trial of Cornish states positively as occurring at that last meeting facts as to which he had previously been in some doubt. For in a letter he wrote after his earlier confessions, he said: "I cannot recollect whether I was twice at Mr. Shephard's with the Duke of Monmouth, or but once; but if I was but once, then I heard Mr. Ferguson relate to my Lord of Shaftesbury some part of their debates at another time, as that they had resolved of the 19th of November for the rising, and some heads of a

declaration ; whether I heard this debate at Mr. Shephard's or at my Lord Shaftesburie's lodgings I cannot be positive in." He said the same at Lord William Russel's trial, but asserted that he was not present when a declaration was read, for it was done before he came in ; and yet at Cornish's trial he described the scene of reading the declaration, and epitomised its contents.

Shephard afterwards declared that, in the end of October, Mr. Ferguson came to him in the Duke of Monmouth's name, and asked the conveniency of his house for him and some other persons of quality to meet there. In the evening the Duke of Monmouth, Lord Grey, Lord Russel, Sir Thomas Armstrong, Colonel Rumsey, and Mr. Ferguson came. Sir Thomas asked that no servants should be allowed to come in, as they wished to be private, and Shephard himself went down for the wine that they wanted. He went "several times to fetch wine and sugar and nutmeg." A pretty large paper was read by Ferguson, in the nature of a declaration, setting forth the grievances of the nation, and shown, as Shephard supposed, for alteration. He could not be certain that Lord Russel was there when it was read. Russel positively denied that he was at more than one meeting at Shephard's, and declared that Rumsey was there when he came in. At Cornish's trial Shephard said that Ferguson pulled the declaration out of his shoe—"he pulled off his shoe, and pulled it out there." He expressly contradicted the previous statement of Rumsey, that when Alderman Cornish came in "Mr. Ferguson opened his bosom, and from under his stomach he pulled out a paper ; they told him they had had that paper read, and desired to read it to him ; Mr. Ferguson read it, and Mr. Shephard held the candle all the while that it was reading ; and, after they had read it, they asked him how he liked it, and he did say he liked it very well." It does not appear at which of the meetings this

declaration was read, but Lord Grey says, "There was at one of our meetings a paper read which Mr. Ferguson brought: it was designed for a declaration, but who gave order or instructions for it I know not, nor can I now repeat all the particular heads of it. I remember it began with some account of the ends of Government in general, and then enumerated the many grievances and oppressions (as he called them) which the nation lay under, and the several arbitrary steps the King had made (so was the expression) in order to absoluteness; and declared the cause of our taking up arms was to redress those grievances, and to deliver the King from the evil counsels of those about him, who advised him to such actions as tended to the destruction of the Government; and the consideration of all things therein mentioned was referred to the wisdom of a Parliament which was required speedily to be called. It concluded with a solemn protestation that we did not intend the least hurt to the King, nor any considerable alteration in the Government, but drew our swords to support it, and to preserve the royal person of the King."

As to what else took place at the two meetings, there is not the same ambiguity. Before coming to the first one, Lord Grey had called on Mr. Trenchard, a gentleman of property near Taunton, who gave him a good account of affairs in the west. Sir Thomas Armstrong came in, and he and Grey went on to Shephard's, where they found Shephard, Rumsey, and Ferguson. Half an hour afterwards the Duke and Lord Russel entered; and, after some general conversation, Ferguson said that he had recently seen Lord Shaftesbury, and delivered a long message from him, the essence of which was that he desired a good understanding between them all, and that they would come to his assistance and make success more certain, otherwise he would be forced to act by himself. Monmouth and Russel replied that they were willing to engage if there was strength enough—that they had often

heard of Shaftesbury's ten thousand brisk boys, but did not know where to find them. They asked what number of men Shaftesbury was sure of, where they were, and how they were armed. Ferguson answered "that it was impossible for him or any man living to name where every individual man lived of such a number, unless they were a formed force and enlisted, but that being impracticable in our case, the method my Lord Shaftesbury had taken was this: his Lordship had fifteen or sixteen gentlemen of his acquaintance, in and about the city (on whose honesty and words he could depend), who had undertaken to bring in so many hundreds each man (at such a time as should be agreed on), which number, being cast up, amounted to 5000 men; and that he thought a sufficient number to begin withal, and did not doubt but in a few hours after to have five time as many more; that several of those gentlemen who were engaged with my Lord (and had promised the assistance of men) were known to his Grace and my Lord Russel, and should wait on them and give them the same assurance, if they distrusted the account he had given or desired to speak with them upon it; that for arms, they had got some, and knew where to have more; that he himself had purchased several cannon and three carriages, which were all buried; he added further that, if we thought fit to assist my Lord, we must agree upon a time, and that speedily; for my Lord was ready for action and very impatient." After "some consideration, many questions and answers," the Lords resolved "to engage with my Lord," and that, "except the western interest," all efforts should be directed to the City. It was finally decided that the next Sunday but one should be the time of the rising, and that Trenchard should be sent down to Taunton, that he and Sir William Courtney might rouse the west at the same time. The details of the outbreak were discussed: Sunday night was fixed, because the streets

were fuller than on ordinary evenings, and men could be collected unperceived. The conspirators were to be secretly collected at the Duke of Monmouth's, at Northumberland House, at Bedford House, and four or five meeting-houses in the City. About eleven at night they were to issue forth and attack the trainbands at the Exchange, possess themselves of Newgate, Ludgate, and Aldersgate, and take up a position on Snowhill and Fleet Bridge, to receive the assault of the Guards. At Snowhill there was to be a barricade, and cannon planted on ship-carriages; at Fleet Bridge they intended to plant the other guns, throw up a breastwork, and fill the houses with musketeers. London Bridge was to be seized, to cut the communication between Whitehall and the Tower. These posts being held by determined men, time would be given for others to assemble, and, under Lord Macclesfield's command, make a detour to assail the royal forces in the rear, while another body might march up the south bank of the river, cross in lighters to Westminster, and attack Whitehall. Their hope was that the King would be advised to go to Portsmouth, and would follow the advice, and "that in a few hours we should be masters of London."

There was also some talk, begun by Sir Thomas Armstrong (according to Lord Grey), which both Shephard and Rumsey remembered, of viewing the posts of the Guards at the Savoy and Mews. In that discussion, according to Rumsey, Ferguson took part. Before parting they agreed to meet again the following week, three or four days before that fixed for the rising.

The Duke of Monmouth and Lord Grey soon held an interview with Mr. Trenchard, and informed him of the part he was desired to play. But Trenchard "seemed strangely surprised at their near approach," and said that he would require a fortnight or three weeks to prepare his friends. Lord Grey reminded him of the different account he had given

of affairs at Taunton, on the day of the meeting at Shephard's: "He made no reply, or one not worth remembering, and showed more fear than ever I saw in any man before or since," but promised to go to Taunton, make preparations for a rising with all possible speed, and send word in a few days when he would be ready.

One evening soon after, the Duke, Lord Grey, and Sir Thomas Armstrong walked round to take stock of the positions and discipline of the Guards. The Duke spoke to the sentries, went into the Savoy, and stayed so long that his friends began to get nervous, but his opinion at both places was that "it would do."

On the night fixed, the same party again met at Mr. Shephard's. The Duke of Monmouth reported the state of the military posts, and that Trenchard's preparations were so backward that he could not be ready for a fortnight or three weeks. Trenchard had said he must give his friends time to make their settlements, but it was suspected that his heart had failed him, and Lord Grey stigmatised him as a "cockscomb." Sir William Courtney, too, "would not stir," and, after some discussion, it was decided to defer the rising until they heard again from the west. Towards the end of the meeting Colonel Rumsey came in; they told him what the state of affairs was, and that action must again be postponed. They, however, agreed to meet again ten or fourteen days after, and Lord Grey records that the Duke of Monmouth ordered Mr. Ferguson to get four more field-pieces made against that time.

Rumsey, according to his own account, had been sent by Lord Shaftesbury to receive the final assurance of immediate action, and the result of the report he made was Shaftesbury's instant flight.

The narrative given by Ferguson substantially confirms the other accounts of these two meetings, though it only

deals with the first, except in still further discrediting the testimony of Rumsey that hung poor Cornish. He says, after dealing with the frustration of the assassination and the revived co-operation towards an insurrection, "What I have now intimated gave the rise and occasion to the consult at Mr. Thomas Shephard's, which proved afterwards so fatal both to that honourable and virtuous person my Lord Russel, and to that honest gentleman Alderman Cornish. In reference to which meeting I do account myself bound in respect to their memory, as well as to truly (?) affirm upon the faith of a Christian, that as Mr. Cornish was neither present during the debates, nor heard anything thereof what was transacting, having continued only so long in the room as to drink a glass or two of wine, and to excuse himself from staying, so my Lord Russel was so far from being there before Colonel Rumsey, and that Rumsey was the first man who came thither, and whom Sir Thomas Armstrong and myself, though arriving sooner than my Lord, found sitting alone by the fire at our entrance into the room. At whose presence as we two, as well as they who came after were not a little surprised, in that he was neither invited nor expected, so the only reason why he was unhappily admitted to remain was pretending to be sent with a message by the Earl of Shaftesbury. For though we all knew that he was designed rather as a spy upon the company to observe whether our proceeding in the matter that was to be treated appeared vigorous and sincere, than one that was worthy to deliver a message, seeing there was no occasion for any such thing, in that his Lordship had that very day conveyed his desire and opinion to a noble person there present by another hand; yet that we might not administer any umbrage to the said Earl, as if we only intended to delude and amuse him, Rumsey was permitted to continue among us that he might be able to report to him that sent him,

with what frankness, zeal, and integrity we acted. What resolutions were then taken, and how they came to be defeated, is too publicly known to need any place in this relation." Ferguson does not know whether Trenchard's failure was to be ascribed to fear, or to another reason, but affirms that he had the night before encouraged the Duke of Monmouth to go on with promises of support. That it was fear he is inclined to think from Trenchard's subsequent conduct in 1685, when he withdrew from England, though the Duke had informed him of his intended descent and reliance on his support. But whatever was the cause, his failure caused the breakdown of the insurrection at this time.

Lord Shaftesbury now declared that their designs could not be long concealed, there being so many acquainted with them. After shifting his quarters to Wapping for a day or two, on the night of the great fire there, being that of the very day on which the rising was to have taken place, accompanied only by Ferguson and Walcot, he slipped down the river, and took shipping for Holland. Ferguson also had been more or less in concealment, "having been forced to abscond too, because of a warrant out against him for publishing some one or other of his many treasonable pamphlets."¹ He says himself that Lord Shaftesbury had received fresh intelligence from a friend at Whitehall that the Court had obtained new matter of accusation against him, and intended to seize and arraign him; "and myself being told about the same time that there was a warrant issued out for apprehending me, and that my destruction was unavoidable if I fell into their hands, I did therefore,

¹ 'On December 11th [three weeks later] Joshua Bowes wrote to Lord Preston: "A servant to a person of quality having [been] seized in conveying a paper to the press importing a vindication of the Association, upon his examination he confessed that one Mr. Ferguson was the author, who is since fled into Holland."

in order to escape their fury and provide for my safety, determine to depart the nation and to retreat hither; and as I owe the intelligence of my danger, and stand indebted for my life, to a pastor of the Church of England who had accidentally heard it from a Court Lord, to whom the present King had imparted it, so Atterbury used such diligence to have executed his warrant that, notwithstanding the warning I had, I very narrowly escaped him, he entering at one door as I got out at another."

While he lay concealed till a ship could be found, Ferguson found means to acquaint the Duke of Monmouth, Sir Thomas Armstrong, and "the other gentlemen," with the exact posture in which he left things; to tell them the names of the assassination plotters, that Rumsey and West were the chief instigators, and that he believed the scheme would be revived. Sir Thomas and his friend tried to persuade him to remain, offering their assistance to conceal him in the town. He only got their consent to his flight on the pledge that he would "return in case of necessity, whatsoever either the hazard or cost of it should prove."

Carthago non adhuc deleta comitem de Shaftesbury in gremium suum recipere vult. If the words were not spoken, they well express the fact. The treaty of extradition which had been made with England was got over by making the Earl a burgher of Amsterdam, a mark of respect that was also paid to Ferguson. Though he was much with Shaftesbury, the different opinions which Ferguson held of the Duke of Monmouth caused surprise to many of their friends, particularly to Fletcher of Salton. Both the exiles expressed their opinions freely; but the fact does not seem to have altered the terms on which they stood to each other. Shaftesbury was in very delicate health, and to his solicitude for him Ferguson had added deep anxiety for his wife, to

which a series of letters rapidly despatched one after another bear witness. They have been preserved because they were intercepted by Government; and it is to the pain thus caused to the affectionate husband and devoted wife that we owe a very different view of "The Plotter's" character from what we should otherwise have possessed. The first points to the break up of the household in Hatton Garden, caused by Atterbury's appearance; for it is addressed to

"Mrs. Ferguson, to be left at Mr. Brindley's
At the Crown in Fenchurch St., London,"

and the date shows that her husband lost no time in trying to communicate with her.

"ROTTERDAM, Nov. 28, '82.

"MY DEAREST HEART,—I am exceedingly alarmed with the news of a fire at Wapping, wherein I fear many of our friends are deeply involved. For though our intelligence be uncertain both as to the place where it begun and where it was stopt, yet I conclude it was in our neighbourhood. Nor can I enjoy quiet in my mind till I receive a particular account of it, and whether thou hast suffered any damage by it, and which of our acquaintances are most concerned in the losses sustained by it. By what we can gather from reports, it was not casual but designed, and if so I suppose it will be accordingly resented. We have fixed our residence at Rotterdam, where we judge ourselves assured of protection from the Government; and therefore pray let me hear from thee with all expedition, directing my letters for Mr. Williams, to be left with Mr. Washington, merchant in Rotterdam. Neither forget to acquaint me with all circumstances relating to thyself, my children, and the public concerns so far as we are interested in them. Were I sure of thy health and welfare, I can contentedly digest all the other ingredients of my present condition; and as thou

wouldst have me enjoy my comfort here, thou must be kind to thyself and cheerful at home. I have written twice to thee before—once by the packet, and once by a friend, and extremely long to have a return. Give my service to such as bear that friendship for me as to visit thee or inquire after me, and let me know how Frank behaves herself, and whether dear Hannah be well. My dear, my life as well as all the comforts of it, are bound up in thee, and as thou hast been partner in my sorrows, so I trust in God we shall in due time share in one another's joys. The blessings of Him that dwellest in the highest be with thee and ours. I am, my dearest heart, thine as much as it is possible to be.

“ R. ff.”

A fortnight later he writes from Amsterdam:—

“ AMSTERDAM, Dec. 12th, '82.

“ DEAREST HEART,—It is no small affliction to me that I have heard but once from thee since my arrival in Holland; and were I not in hope that thy letters are gone to Rotterdam, and that I may expect some from thence, I should be inexpressibly dejected. Nor should I take much pleasure either in my own health or safety, if I once understood that thou art either ill or in trouble. When I reflect upon my own escape, considering what warrants were out against me, how some thirsted for my blood, and how near I was once being apprehended, I cannot but hope that God doth preserve me for some further service, and that He will make us again happy in the enjoyment of one another. I find correspondence difficult, seeing all letters are broken up which they suspect inclosures to us, and therefore I have given thee a direction underneath how thou mayest send to me with the best security. There hath been a messenger here already to inquire after us, and what may be there resolved upon as to the desiring this State to drive us home I cannot tell, nor am

solicitous. We had a report before the last post came, and which had its rise among the Papists in this town, that the King was seized. I wish it be not like many other things, which they have foretold when they knew they were ready to be executed. My dear, thou and my children sleep and awake with me, all the comfort I have in this world being bound up in you ; and, next to an opportunity of serving God and my generation, I desire nothing so much as to be able to (approve) myself one that entirely honours thee.

“ R. Ff.

“ Give my service and respects to all my friends.”

“ AMSTERDAM, Dec. 19th, '82.

“ MY DEAR,—Thine of the 12th is come to hand, which is all I have received since that of the 5th, and, to my grief, I understand by both that thy weakness continues. For wert thou well I should despise all that my enemies on that side are doing against me. For as I have given no legal cause, so I am sure of the protection of this Government against their unjust wrath. 'Tis an argument they can find nothing in what I have done, especially to hurt me, seeing they are forced to charge the second part of the ‘Growth of Popery’ and a ‘Vindication of the Association’ upon me, which I had no hand in, nor knew anything of ; and as to other things, whereof I am accused, I desire them to treat me for them, could I have a fair and independent trial. However, I have peace in endeavouring to have done my duty, whatsoever punishment they think me worthy of upon that score. Nor do I doubt but that the day will come when I shall be esteemed for it, and they condemned for their foolish and malicious persecution ; and, when I reflect upon my preservation from their rage hitherto, I look upon it as an earnest that I shall live to triumph over all their indignation. Couldst thou have but the quietness in my absence that I

have in being necessitated to it, I would not exchange my condition for ease and preferment, accompanied by a base neglect of my duty to God and the nation. Do not therefore, by afflicting thyself, afflict me more than either King or Council can. The person with whom I came hither treats me as his son as well as his friend. Only for my accommodation I have been forced to buy two pair of sheets and to hire a bed, but as for all things else they are provided to my hand. Since I began to write I have received a letter by a private hand, bearing date Dec. 7th, and thank thee for it, and the care thou hast of our little concernments there. Give my true respects to Mr. B. for his many kindnesses, both old and new. It is not the first time we have found him a friend in adversity, which is more than I reckon upon from a brother. Remember me to my children, and tell them that as they behave themselves in my absence I shall retain for them the love and care of a father. Pray, as thou wouldest have me enjoy any comfort here, tender yourself more, and want nothing that thy weak condition calls for or requires.—I remain, Thine,
R. ff.”

“AMSTERDAM, Dec. 25, '82.

“MY DEAR,—Thine of the 19th is come safe to hand, but with a renewal of my grief, in that thou still continuest weak, I cannot be with thee to assist and comfort thee in thy afflicted condition. Nor dost thou tell me whether we have any friends left to concern themselves in thee, either in the way of care or sympathy. However, the God that hath been our stay all our days will not forsake us in the time of our distress. My thoughts are concerning thee sleeping and waking, and I am sometimes resolving to venture over to see thee, whatsoever the hazard and jeopardy of it may be. And were it not more for reserving myself to

thine and my children's benefit than any solicitude about my own safety, many days should not elapse before I were in London. Remember me to such as enquire after me, and tell them that out of respect to them I forbear writing, for it would not be to their advantage to be thought to correspond with a man under the character your Government hath fastened upon me. I plainly see it will not be long ere things come to their issue; for serving the Papists cannot but provoke the Protestants to begin. They are resolved to venture it themselves; and though they cannot but judge it a desperate attempt, yet they have advanced too far to retreat. The Prince of Orange is ill, and it is generally believed he cannot live long, though he should escape his present distemper. And should he drop away it would make a great alteration in the posture of affairs on this side. For God's sake, and as thou lovest me and poor little Hannah, use all means towards thy recovery, and especially be cheerful, without which nothing else will have any effect. And while there is either any money, or goods that will sell, spare no cost for thy relief. Give my love to the children, and assure thyself that I will ever remain, my dear, entirely thine,

R. ff."

"AMSTERDAM, Dec. 26, '82.

"MY VERY DEAR,—I have received none from you since that of the 19th, in which I had the information of your continuing weak, and the late means you had submitted unto in order to relief. The Lord attend those methods and endeavours with His blessing, and magnify His own power and wisdom in the failure of all human skill and ability. 'Tis He above that by commanding the lame to rise and walk, can at the same time communicate strength unto them. I can say that, notwithstanding the perfect measure of health which I enjoy, yet I am not well, nor can be so,

while thou remainest with so much pain and weakness. And that which exceedingly afflicts me is, that I am assured thy concernments for me have hindered and obstructed thy recovery, which makes me often sigh that thou wouldst love more moderately. However, an excess in that should greatly oblige me, and make me long for an opportunity of acknowledging it. I wrote thee by a friend who came over by this packet, and therefore shall add no more, but respects to all friends, love to my children, save that I am, my very dear,

“THINE.”

“AMSTERDAM, Dec. 29, '82.

“MY DEAREST,—This is the 3rd since I had a line from thee, which does not a little increase my apprehensions and fears of thy weakness. And I am jealous lest thy grief for my absence should contribute too much to the continuance of thy illness. Whereas thou canst not but know, that as what hath threatened me is for doing my duty, so I stayed with thee to the last minute wherein I would be safe ; when, had not the regard which I bear to thee and my children made me willing to preserve myself, I would, for anything that might have personally befallen me, [have] abandoned myself to their rage. And the sense I go daily under of thy condition, makes me not only weary of myself here, though I enjoy the utmost I could propose or expect, but renders me inclinable to return, whatsoever may ensue upon it. For whilst thou art ill and melancholy, it is not possible I could be well here. If thou cherish thy grief, neither nature nor any physical means can relieve thee ; and if thou pine away through succumbing to thy distemper, thou wilt soon hasten my following thee, and thereby we shall leave two poor little desolate orphans to a careless and ungrateful world. I am persuaded it will not be long before we may see better days, if we do not weary and faint in the short interim.

My Lord Shaftesbury hath for some days past been troubled with the gout, but I hope he is in no danger. My service to friends, and love to my children.—I am, THINE.”

“AMSTERDAM, Jan. 5th, '82-3.

“DEAREST HEART,—This is the fourth since I received one line from thee, which fills me with amazement, seeing Frank might have written if thy weakness be such as that thou canst not. For both thine own state and the condition of affairs in England render it much more necessary that I should every week hear from thee than it would be provided things went well, and that thou enjoyed thy health. Though I have all imaginable care taken of me by my Lord, yet I am resolved not to continue here without thee, and therefore have been contriving how to make an honourable provision for my family in this place. And if things grow worse in England, I shall esteem it an effect of God's goodness towards us in that He hath sent me hither beforehand, to find out a way of subsistence in this place of safety for us. For as I cannot live without thy company, so I would fain be in such a condition as that we shall not need be burdensome to any, but may be helpful to others. The ways proposed to me are either to be a Professor in a University, or set up a lecture in this city, either of which I can compass, so that we may subsist honourably by them; not but that I had rather return to England than be Burgomaster of Amsterdam, should we enjoy our consciences with the security of our lives there. Yet thou canst not blame me for providing against the worst. For God's sake fail me not a post, and do not add to the sorrow I am under in being from thee by denying me the satisfaction and comfort of hearing how thou doest. Our little gentleman is revived, and we are all now in good health. Service to all friends, and love to my children.—I am, dearest heart, wholly thine,

“R. ff.”

“AMSTERDAM, Jan. 9, '82-83.

“MY DEAR HEART,—This is the fifth letter I have sent thee since I left Hatton Garden, and have not yet received one line. 'Tis some excuse that the letters dated at London this day sevensnight are not yet arrived. For all the packet boat be detained by distress of weather on this side, we want two posts. But if I miss a line by the first express I shall be wonderfully uneasy. The news from England doth so much afflict me that I can receive no rest till I hear from thee. And according as thy advice shall be, I will either remove thee from thence, or return and suffer all hazard with thee; for our sorrows and comforts shall be common. But if it be the Lord's will that there should be a place of refuge for us, I pray thee not only bow to His sovereignty in it, but acknowledge His goodness. I abide in very good health, and exceedingly long to hear the like of thee and my children. I know not how to write to any friends till I receive some information from thee, which shall be my measure both in my resolves here and my addresses thither. The God of Grace and Peace be with thee, and give thee wisdom in the circumstances that thou art set in. Remember me to Hannah, etc.—I am, in the most sacred bonds, Thine,
“ROB. ff.”

“AMSTERDAM, Jan. 12, 1682-83.

“MY DEAR,—I have received thine of January 2, and do much wonder how mine to thee went to miscarry, considering the care I use to have them arrive with safety. I am infinitely sorry that thy weakness continues, and do daily visit the Lord that He would direct unto, and bless, means whereby thou mayest be relieved. Mr. Smith, the chirurgeon, is of my acquaintance, and hath always proffered a friendship for me, which I hope he will manifest towards thee, which is the best way of expressing the friendship that any

have for me. Accordingly let him know, when you see him, and withal tell him how much I depend upon him, and to what a degree he will oblige me by his being kind to you. For as this is a season wherein we may know how to distinguish betwixt a real friend and a pretended one, so it shall be a great measure of my judging of persons hereafter answerable to what their behaviour hath been now. I am glad the children carry it dutifully, for thereby they will further endear themselves to their father. Let not the failure of means of supply hinder thee from all convenient expense upon thyself, for I doubt not but God will still provide for us, if not by one means, yet by another. 'Tis an addition of affliction to me to hear how the poor people at Wapping are treated, yet it is not unlikely but that affairs on this side the water may give some check to the present career. Or if the violence there hold on, and continue as it has gone, things must needs come to a speedy issue. My dear, though I correspond with nobody in England, yet I should be glad some one friend or another would give me an account of the present state of affairs by the hand that I sent the spectacles by. Our little gentleman has relapsed again, and hath been very ill for these two or three days past, but I do not apprehend any danger of his life. I have subjoined a receipt against the gout which I had from Mrs. Prince, who hath found great advantage in the use of it. Give my service to all friends, and my love to the children.

—I am, my dear, THINE."

"Take two oz. of turpentine, wash it in alder water, add to it one oz. of soap and one oz. of salt, with the yolk of one egg, and, having mixed all together, apply it to the part, upon brown paper made very smooth with a sleek stone. This will draw out the pain; and to strengthen it afterwards take flowers of camomile, and, having beat them into powder, mix it with butter milk into a poultice, and apply it very warm."

“AMSTERDAM, Jan. $\frac{16}{29}$, 1684.

“MY DEAREST,—It is no small rejoicing to me that thou dost not despaire of recovering thy strength, and that thou art willing to persevere with the use of which I pray the Lord to second with His blessing. And as I am myself very much obliged to Dr. Cox for his seasonable and generous kindness, so I will not faile within a post or two to acknowledge it in a letter to himself. My concernedness for my Lord's illness is apology enough for my not writing to him at present, but I hope his distemper is so much abated that by the next I may both enjoy more freedom of mind myself, and be able to inform the Dr. of his recovery. Tell Hannah that I am not forgetful of her, and will send her that which shall be of more value than playthings. And let Frank know that I am glad her ague abates, and that her only way to oblige me is by being dutiful to you. Give my particular respects to Mr. Burton, for no man is further valuable to me than they are loving and friendly to thee. As to that thou writst concerning Mr. Palmer of Bethnal Green, he may remitt them provided he can do it by a private hand. . . .” [The paper is here cut across.]

“AMSTERDAM, Jan. $\frac{19}{29}$, 1684.

“MY DEAREST,—Having had occasion by reason of my Lord's illness to converse with some of the best physicians here, and having represented thy case to them as well as I could, they have recommended a plaister to be applyed to the part affected, as judging that that will be most proper and most effectual. Accordingly I have enclosed the receipt for the making of it, which I would have thee shew Dr. Cox, so that if he approve it, thou mayst get an apothecary to prepare it. They advise bleeding with leeches or cupping glasses just before the application, but not upon the knee itself, but upon the two sides of it and underneath.” This

letter, which is also cut across here, is addressed,—“To Mrs. Ferguson—Leave this at Mr. Brindley’s at the Crown in Fenchurch Street.”

There is something very touching in the idea of the exiled husband obtaining prescriptions from the physicians who attended on the expatriated statesman, now lying on his deathbed in the country he had threatened to destroy, and forwarding them for the relief of the wife in sickness and straitened circumstances at home, but only to be intercepted by the agents of the Government, to be scanned by hostile eyes, and be buried for two centuries amid dusty documents in the repositories of the State. In the Low Countries Ferguson met many of his own countrymen, fugitives like himself, and, doubtless, schemes were talked over which afterwards bore fruit. Shaftesbury’s Dutch friends were chiefly of the sect of the Brownists or Independents, and Ferguson, it is said, had previously preached in a Brownist church in Holland, and did so now in Amsterdam. “According to Anthony Wood, John Locke was his companion at Amsterdam, and derived from him many of the opinions which made the philosopher offensive to the academic biographer.” Shaftesbury’s lodging was in the house of Mr. Abraham Keck, a merchant on the Gelder Kay, and there, on the forenoon of the 21st January 1683, the versatile statesman breathed his last, “Ferguson and Walcot only, of all his coadjutors, keeping by him to the last.” Dalrymple, with his usual love of effect, says that Shaftesbury “died in the arms of Ferguson and Walcot, who only, of all the many thousands who had sworn to share the same fate with him, adhered to his fortune to the last;” and adds that, “with regard to the fact of Shaftesbury dying in Ferguson’s arms, it’s a common tradition among Ferguson’s relations in Scotland.” But

Shaftesbury's biographer records that, between eleven and twelve on Sunday forenoon, he asked for something to drink. It was brought, and he then begged his attendant "to raise him a little in the bed, and while this was doing he died in the gentleman's arms after having cast some very deep sighs." Ferguson had "sat up with him the previous night," and when a will which he made a few days before (17th January) was opened, it showed that he had left "to my worthy friend Thos. Walcot, Esq., £10 to buy him a ring; to my worthy friend Mr. Robert Ferguson, forty pounds."

It would have been interesting to possess the account of Shaftesbury's last moments, which Ferguson sent to his wife; but this seems to have been more successful in reaching its destination than were his other letters. The Earl was now no more obnoxious to punishment or malice, "beyond the reach of English cut-throats or Irish witnesses," and might be referred to by his legitimate name and rank. So in the next letter there is no ambiguous allusion to him.

AMSTERDAM, *Jan. 26,* } 1682-3.
Feb. 3, }

"MY DEAREST,—I gave thee an account by my last of the death of the Earl of Shaftesbury, but can expect none from thee till the wind turn, which blows at present directly out of the east. I have furnished myself against the weather as well as I can, and besides stir very little abroad to expose myself to the inconvenience of it. The legacy that is left me I cannot receive this month, and so cannot sooner return the £20 I wrote to thee of. Though I thank thee for thy offer of remitting some to me in case I need it, yet I am sensible of my having left too little to entertain a thought of drawing any of it from thee. My great solicitude is that thou wilt be too frugal and sparing towards thyself

as being doubtful in reference to supplies for the future. But I beseech thee, let not the fear of that cause thee want anything thou shalt have need or occasion for, for the same God that hath provided for us all our days is not only able but will still relieve us. Yet I hope there are some about London that will not be so forgetful of their promises, but that they will ere long look after thee and thine. I pray thee, let not the death of the eminent weak gentleman raise any fears in thee in reference to me. For as I never enjoyed my health better, so the clime as well as the diet are very agreeable to my constitution. I may have a Professorship at Francker in Friesland, where Dr. Amos was heretofore Professor, but I will advise well before I entertain it, as apprehending the country may be too cold for thee. The tokens which I intend my children I delay sending till the corpse goes over. Seal the enclosed after you have read it, and deliver to Dr. Cox. Service to friends and love to my children. I sympathise with thee in all thy sorrows and pains, and do pray the Lord to rebuke them, and restore and preserve thee for him that is, my dearest, unfeignedly and entirely,

THINE."

AMSTERDAM, *Jan. 30*
Feb. 9, 1684.

"DEAREST HEART,—All thine till the 23rd are come safely to hand, but by the last I have a very saddening and afflicted account of thy condition. One depth calls upon another. The Lord is pleased to repeat His trials, though He alter and change the kind of them. It was no small astonishment, when I had just read a relation of the sorrows thou hast undergone by the pains and lameness of thy knee in thy other letter which came at the same time, that thou hast been tortured by the stone to the very threatening of thy life. I can say that I sympathise with thee, and am

troubled to my very soul to be separated from thee under thy sore and various trials, so that I can neither yield my own assistance nor seek the help and relief of others to thee. All I can do is to spread thy case before God, and to beg that He would heal all thy diseases, and in His time restore ease and joy to thee according to the days wherein thou hast seen sorrow. Nor am I without hope of seeing thee again in the enjoyment of health and peace. My child Hannah is very dear to me. And as I promised myself much comfort in her, so I solemnly undertake to have a special and tender care of her. And as for Frank I will remember her upon the score of her duty and obedience to thee as well as upon account of being my child. The unkindness of others I am sorry for, but cannot help. It is in us only to deserve friendship, but it belongs to others to show it. I have seriously reflected upon and examined all that hath exposed me to trouble, and, instead of finding cause to regret, I have comfort and peace in endeavouring to do what I could for the cause of Christ and the interest of England. Surely it is better to suffer for the discharge of one's duty, than to be involved in calamities through the neglect of it. And if I mistake not there is like to be suddenly the loss of such persons, whatsoever my portion for the present be. However, I shall learn from the carriages of men to put a difference betwixt such as only pretend themselves friends and they that really are so. I received a line from a great man in Drury Lane, and which I have returned an answer that I would have thee send and convey to Colonel Owen, to be delivered after thou hast read it. And withal tell the Colonel and his lady how much I esteem myself obliged to them, and shall accordingly value and serve them, if ever it pleases God to furnish me with an opportunity. I purpose likewise to write both to Dr. King and him since I can meet with a private and safe

hand. If either he who brought one from England returns again, or he by whom I sent the last week be got to come from thence, thou mayest convey anything to me that thou or friends have a mind to send. The Lord refresh me with good tidings from thee, and preserve thee for, THINE.

“Dispose of that which was enclosed in the last for Dr. Cox as thou thinkest meet. Service to friends, and my most hearty and entire love to thyself once again, THINE.”

“AMSTERDAM, Feb. $\frac{1}{11}$, 1683.

“MY VERY DEAR,—I have thine of the 26th of January last, but the packet with the letters of the 30th is not yet arrived. I reckon my lady’s servant will go near to return by that, and then I hope to hear from thee at large. God be thanked that the last account of thy condition was not every way so saddening as the former was. Nothing doth affect me so much as that thy illness continues, and that I cannot be with thee. The unkindness of persons to my family now I am absent doth not much impress me, seeing I never expected any reward from man but God. And besides I would hope that though there be some that are false and ungrateful, yet there are others of a more Christian and noble temper. Thou knowest I have often said that, were it not that I would not be wanting to serve the interest of God and mankind so far as I am able, I hardly think this generation for the generality of it worth the saving. My greatest fear is that the unkindness of others to thee will make thee unkind to yourself. I should not refuse the friendship of any, yet I hope we shall not need the bounty of such as thou gavest me the character and acquainted me with the carriage of. Things cannot continue long in the state they are at present there, but they will either come to be such as that I may safely return or to be such as few

honest men will be able to stay in England. My Lord had no tea, nor did he care much to drink it. It is both as scarce and dear here as it can be with you. Let me know whether I shall return the £20 in specie or in goods, and, if in goods, what thou either most needs thyself or judgest will be the best to sell. Service to friends, and love to my children.—I am wholly
THINE.

“A receipt for the Stone.—Take the gum of a cherry-tree, and, having made it into powder, put as much as will lie upon a shilling into Rhenish wine, and drink. This may be repeated as often as there is occasion.”

“AMSTERDAM, Feb. $\frac{6}{10}$, 1683.

“MY DEAR,—I have thine by John Gray, who arrived hither on Saturday night, and his account of thy condition, as well as thine own, increaseth my grief as well as concern for thee. For as I cannot come to thee with safety, so I find that thy weakness will not allow thee to think of coming hither. The Lord help us, therefore, to bear our separation from one another with patience, and in His own time, either to enable thee to have a voyage to Holland, or open a door for me to return into England. In the meantime I resolve to leave this city for a while, so that I would have thee direct no letters to me till I either come back to this place, or inform thee where I shall fix. Whether my Lord hath left me anything besides what I wrote thee of is more than I know, for what settlement he made of his state was left in England, being done there. That bequeathment I acquainted thee with, as also some legacies to those who went home with him, do all arise and are made payable out of those monies which he brought along with him into these parts. And as I have not yet received a farthing of this, so I have not been so much as offered one penny ever since I left

Wapping. 'Tis true I might have a place if I could think of settling here. But as I am, there is nothing to be had without such applications as I will not be guilty of. For though I will husband the little I have as well as I can, I will do no sneaking thing to get more. I will rather choose to leave a clean reputation behind me, than seek to bring Dutch money at any time into England with the diminishing of it. Give my service to Dr. K., and let him know that it is out of respect to him, as knowing the hazard in conveyance, that I forbear writing to him. For I write to none but to such as have written to me, unless they be such as thou didst advise me to, and who will not care if my letters to them should be intercepted. All that is due to such as inquire for me, with my love to the children, I am Thine as much as I can."

It is impossible to rise from the perusal of these letters, written so naturally from the husband to the wife, and speaking, apparently, the unrestrained sentiments of his mind, without feeling that their author could not possibly have been the villain he is painted. The last shows a sense of honour in money matters which is sufficient to discredit an allegation made by Burnet,¹ and it would require very strong evidence to force one to the conclusion that "a profligate knave" penned the words, "Next to an opportunity of serving God and my generation, I desire nothing so much as to be able to approve myself one that entirely honours thee." And apart from their merely personal aspect, they are of value as letting us behind the scenes, and affording a glimpse into the privations and the daily life of those who, fugitives from Britain for conscience' sake, found in the Holland of those days a welcome and an asylum.

¹ *Vide* Appendix II.

CHAPTER V.

1683.

LIFE IN HIDING.

MEANWHILE things had been drawing to a head in England. In December the Grand Jury had returned a true bill against Ferguson for writing and publishing seditious libels, and the flight of Shaftesbury had not brought about the abandonment of the scheme which had been set on foot. It was indeed impossible for Monmouth and his friends to act "after my Lord and Mr. Ferguson were gone, they having managed the greatest part of the City affairs," but consultation was soon resumed, and on a wider and slightly different basis. In connection with the general insurrection, there grew up a "Cabal," or "Council of Six," composed of the Duke of Monmouth, the Earl of Essex, Lord Howard, Lord William Russel, Mr. Hampden, and Colonel Algernon Sidney. They held a meeting at Mr. Hampden's in January, at which they discussed the best means of securing the co-operation of the Scots; and Algernon Sidney ultimately arranged to send Aaron Smith on a mission to their friends north of the Border, under the pretext of the Carolina Colony. Smith's journey occupied some time, and was followed by the visit to London of certain commissioners on the part of the Scots.

The assassination plotters also resumed their designs. Two days after Christmas, Colonel Rumsey had given a dinner, and some wild talk, in which West took the leading

part, was indulged in. A little later a meeting was held at the Salutation Tavern, in Lombard Street, where the alternative schemes of a general insurrection and the assassination were discussed, and it was agreed "that Ferguson should be sent for home, and that Ludlow should be sent for if it could be." Ludlow was never sent for, but the same evening West and Rumsey sought out Shephard, who knew Ferguson's address, and West "wrote a sort of canting letter, to invite him over for his health," which Shephard despatched.

Ferguson returned in the month of February, arriving in London on Ash Wednesday. Shifting his quarters every now and then between various houses in London, he lived in close concealment, assiduously engaged in directing all the resources he could reach to the great object of the insurrection. He had a difficult task, for the materials were various, and the aims divergent. The disturbing element of Shaftesbury had indeed disappeared, but there were the rivalries of two nations to reconcile, and even in the Council of Six opposing principles were represented. Monmouth and Russel were attached to the royal person and the kingly office; Algernon Sidney and Essex were anxious to set up an aristocratic republic on the model of Venice. Lord Howard of Escrick, as his friends suspected, and his treason proved, cared only for the Government under which he would get most. Among the inferior conspirators were Republicans of a fiercer spirit, some of whom cherished a bitter jealousy of their aristocratic confederates. Of this class the most violent and extreme were those deepest implicated in the assassination scheme; and indeed, on one occasion, West and Rumsey, in their ill-will at the Lords, meditated for a moment "discovering all their intrigues." They were, for the time, restrained by the feeling that "being an informer is an ugly thing," and that it would "give a blow to the Protestant interest all the world over."

The English conspirators of high rank were the Duke of Monmouth; the Earl of Essex, who subsequently committed suicide in the Tower on the morning of Lord Russel's trial; Lord William Russel, whose sad fate is the most picturesque episode of the tragedy; Lord Howard of Escrick, whom nobody trusted, and who distinguished himself by the peculiar baseness with which he gave evidence against his companions; Lord Grey of Wark, a man of no moral principle, whose life was stained by his scandalous seduction of his sister-in-law, who subsequently showed shameful cowardice in the field, and whose narrative of these events, written in the Tower after Sedgemoor, gives the fullest details of some phases of the history, but must be received with caution where it discredits others; Sir Thomas Armstrong, a former officer of the Guards, whose previous career was disfigured by an act of violence, and whose hasty condemnation, on his outlawry without a trial, hurried him to the scaffold, without leaving an account behind him of the transactions in which he shared; John Hampden, a grandson of the Hampden of the Long Parliament; and Colonel Algernon Sidney, who certainly had rendered himself liable to the pains of treason, but whose unjust and irregular trial made him the martyr of his political party. In an intermediate position were Major Wildman, the friend and ally of Sidney; Thomas Shephard, the rich merchant, described as "a violent Nonconformist and disciple of Ferguson's;" Major Holms, one of Cromwell's old officers, who had made Argyle's acquaintance in Scotland before the Restoration, and corresponded with him; and Captain Walcot. In the lower rank of conspirators were West, Rumsey, Rumbold, and Goodenough, and the brothers of the two last, William Rumbold, and Francis Goodenough; Aaron Smith, a solicitor, who had acted professionally for Colledge, "the Protestant Joiner;" William Hone, a joiner, and John

Rouse, both executed for their share in the plot; Zachary Bourn, a brewer, "son to an obstinate Independent, and he himself one of Ferguson's hosts and familiars;" Thomas Lea and Andrew Barber, both Anabaptists; Josiah Keeling, a salter; John Ayloff, a lawyer, and relative of the Hydes, who had distinguished himself by putting a French wooden shoe into the Speaker's chair of the House of Commons, and was to make a sarcastic repartee to James II.; and Joseph Tyley, Edward Norton, Nathaniel Wade, and Richard Nelthrop, "all of them Republican lawyers." To these must be added Holloway and How, both natives of Bristol. West, Rumsey, Shephard, Bourn, Keeling, Lea, and Barber all became evidence for the Crown.

The principal Scottish confederates were the Earl of Argyle; Sir Hugh and Sir John Campbell of Cessnock, near relatives of their chief; Sir John Cochrane of Ochiltree, a younger son of the Earl of Dundonald, and brother-in-law of Claverhouse; Baillie of Jerviswoode, and Commissary Munro. Besides them there were engaged James Stuart, son to Sir James Stuart, Provost of Edinburgh, afterwards the draughtsman of Argyle's declaration, the author of the letter that drew forth Pensionary Fagel's famous reply, and Lord Advocate of Scotland; Lord Melville, "descended from progenitors of such principles as have ever been against the Crown when they have fancied their Kings not zealous for the Reformation;" the Earl of Tarras; Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, whose strange concealment in the family vault, and the abstraction of the sheep's head for his sustenance, is one of the best-known traditions of Scottish family history; Pringle of Torwoodlie; Gordon of Earlston; Denham of East Shiels; Montgomery of Lainshaw; Hugh Scot of Gala; James Murray of Philiphaugh; William Carstares, afterwards the able and respected Principal of Edinburgh University, but who at this stage of his career seems to have considered that "his

forte was sedition;" John Nisbet; and William Spence, secretary to the Earl of Argyle.

Strange and perilous was the life led by Ferguson for a period of four months during this spring of 1683. Constantly in concealment, and often in disguise, he saw many men of different ranks and various dispositions, and yet must have passed long hours of solitude; for his letters show that it was difficult to get exercise, and, hunted as he was, he could venture but little from his den. Several circumstances of interest, and some of importance, connected with his movements and his appearance at this time are preserved. One of his earliest hiding-places was Colonel Rumsey's house, in Soho Square. The host afterwards divulged "that Ferguson was at my house for seven or eight nights, intermitting a night or two, when he told me he went to his wife. During the time he was at my house the Duke of Monmouth came to see him, to the best of my remembrance, twice: the first time I was with them, and all the discourse that passed was about my Lord Shaftesbury's death, and relating the affairs of Holland and the Confederates—the Duke not staying a quarter of an hour. The next time I was not in the room with them. Sir Thomas Armstrong came several times in a morning to see him, sometimes before I was stirring; the first time I showed him the room where he lay, and did not go in with him, I being in my shirt." According to West, Ferguson used to go by the name of Roberts, and had four separate lodgings during his correspondence with him, at three of which West visited him—"at Mr. Bourn's, the Brewer; at Mr. Owen's, a lawyer living at the further end of King St., in New Southampton buildings; and at a cutler's over against Hill's coffee-house in Covent Garden: his fourth lodging was at St. Martin's Lane in the Fields, at a Dutch doctor's or German quack's, which West never was at, and knew not the name of." The information of Blaney, a

barrister of the Temple, and the description subsequently published in the proclamation offering a reward for his capture, enable us to form an idea of his appearance and ordinary dress, when not disguised. In early days he had worn the "usual habit of a Scots clergyman," and Blaney mentions that "he was twice or thrice at the sign of the Sugar Loaf, near the Young Devil Tavern, with Ferguson, and once with another person, who he thinks was young Shute, about the time the Earl of Shaftesbury absented himself, but that Ferguson was not then disguised, but in the habit he used commonly to wear, which was a russet-coloured campane coat and a brown short periwig." He also says "that he saw Ferguson since the Earl of Shaftesbury's death in the house of one Bourn, a brewer, living in Queen Street, over against the Lord Keeper's; that it was about a quarter of year since (*i.e.* before July 1, 1683); that Ferguson was in a night-gown, and therefore he believed he lay in that house; that the discourse they had was about the Earl of Shaftesbury and his death." In the proclamation he was described as "a tall lean man, dark brown hair, a great *Roman* nose, thin jawed, heat in his face, speaks in the Scotch tone, a sharp piercing eye, stoops a little in the shoulders; he hath a shuffling gait that differs from all, wears his periwig down almost over his eyes; about forty-five years of age." Quite the cast of a conspirator, and suggestive of Shakespeare's lines:—

"Yet if my name were liable to fear,
 I do not know the man I should avoid
 So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;
 He is a great observer, and he looks
 Quite through the deeds of men: he loves no plays,
 As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music:
 Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort
 As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit
 That could be moved to smile at anything."

Indeed the stern Scotsman with the long gaunt figure, the aquiline nose, and the piercing glance was a strange ally and associate for the gallant soldier and gay darling of the populace, the fabled hero of the west, the modern Absalom, "so beautiful, so brave!"

The lodging at which Ferguson spent most of his time seems to have been the house of Bourn, the brewer; and as he spoke very freely to young Bourn, who afterwards turned evidence, there is a good deal of information as to those who flocked about him there. He was first brought to Bourn's by Richard Goodenough, under the name of Roberts. The persons that used to come to him, according to Bourn, were Sir Thomas Armstrong—very often, sometimes two or three times a day—Colonel Rumsey, Captain Walcot, Mr. Wade, Mr. Norton, Richard Goodenough, Richard Nelthrop, Mr. West, Mr. Charlton with a wooden leg, Mr. John Freak, Mr. Blaney once or twice, Mr. Thomas Shephard, merchant, Sir Robert Rich, John Starkey, Mr. Bailey, a Scotchman, and Sir ——— Camel and a great many more of his countrymen, and several from Wapping, and Mr. John Ayloffé when in town. "Mr. Bailey, the Scotchman," said Bourn, "sat up one night, if not two, with Mr. Ferguson, and he went several times with him in the evening to the Duke and the other Lords. Ferguson lodged at several places a few nights at a time, and so to my house again, at one Mr. Bickerstaff, a sword-cutler in Covent Garden, at a German doctor's at the Green Posts in St. Martin's Lane, and Mr. Owen's in King St. in Bloomsbury." Carstares, as well as Baillie, often came to Ferguson, and Ferguson told Bourn that Baillie was the "chief man for the Scots, next the Lord Argyle." "The night he sat up with him," says Bourn, "I believe it was about the declaration, for the next day he was going to shew it me, but somebody came up to him and hindered him." He also asserted that "Ferguson lodged at his father's house a month or six weeks;

that he left no papers in his house, and used to say he would never be hanged for papers." But if careful for his own papers, he had a sharp eye for other people's, and Bourn records one observation which is interesting as made by a pamphleteer of one side about the chief manager of the press on the other. "Ferguson desired me to tell them one night when we met that he must have a party to seize Mr. L'Estrange, for he should find strange papers, and that great care must be taken to secure the Paper Office at Whitehall." Strange that the State Paper Office should be the receptacle of his own vindication, and that to its care he should owe any knowledge that posterity possesses of his real character! It is from Bourn also that we learn one of the most remarkable instances of his audacity and readiness. "Ferguson told me," he says, "that one Mr. Owen of Gray's Inn would give £100 towards the design; and further he told me that he was the author of these two libels, viz., a letter about the Black Box, and a letter concerning his Majesty's Declaration: that, as he walked in the fields at that time the discourse was about the Black Box: it came into his mind to write about it, which he did in an ale-house in Chancery lane, and that afterwards when his Majesty's Declaration came out concerning the Duke of Monmouth, he, finding nobody took notice of it in print, resolved to write an answer to that, which he said he did as he lay in his bed one morning, and further told me he got one thrown on his Majesty's hat, as he walked on the Tarras Walk at Windsor, and another laid under his pillow, but would not tell me who it was had so disposed of them two for him; and further told me that the Duke of Monmouth gave him fifty guineas for that piece of service, and so hath done every year since. Mr. Bethel, that was Sheriff of London, was once at my house with Ferguson, and had some private discourse with him." The *res angustæ domi* from which Ferguson's household suffered seem more

than once to have called forth the generosity of his friends. In the spring there died an acquaintance of most of those engaged in the conspiracy—young Shute, a son of one of the Sheriffs to whom Shaftesbury had owed his escape two years before; and, at his funeral, Whitlock says Nelthorp came to him, and asked him for something for poor Ferguson, as he called him, saying he was doing a good work for all honest men. But Whitlock cautiously replied he would give nothing to any man for doing a work he did not know of.

The strange and perilous character of his life at this time is fully confirmed by the tone of his letters to his wife; and, amid the dark and dangerous intrigues in which he was engaged, it is interesting to find the redoubted plotter in anxiety for the fate of his books, and perplexed by the natural impatience of lodging-house keepers. All through, from the time of ejection from the living he had held in Kent, Ferguson seems to have been in straitened circumstances; and in his language to his wife, although the tone is always that of courage and resolution, there is ever evident a strain of affection and anxiety very different from the audacity and resource which impressed his confederates and enemies at the same time. Yet he is always guarded, and the Government could have obtained little information from the communications which fell into their hands, for they never mention where they were written from, and the references to public affairs are few and scanty. When, however, read along with the history of the time in the light of dates, they become instinct with romantic interest; and in them we obtain an instructive peep behind the scenes, into the real inner life of history and the men who make it. Shortly after his return from Holland we find Ferguson writing thus:—

“MY DEAREST,—If thou think that I may come home with safety, I will be with thee on Saturday at night, and stay

a day or two. As both the men in the shop are young, and therefore not likely to be very discreet, so one of them is represented to me under no encouraging character. However, I will venture if thou give me a good report of him, for I truly long to see thee. Yet it is better being in town, tho' from my own house, seeing thou canst hear once a day from me, than to have me so far abroad as I was, whence thy hearing so seldom from me as well as inconveniency of the . . . kept thee in continual perplexity and fear. My dear, being to shift my lodging this evening for a night or two, I would have thee send me a clean cravat, and some more plaisters for my issue. Remember me to the children, and want nothing thou hast either a mind to or occasion for.

“THINE.”

“Feb. 28, 83.”

A month later, at the very time of the Newmarket journey, he writes again :—

“March 19, 83.”

“MY DEAR,—I am surprised as well as sorry that thou shouldst be discontented, because I come not home, seeing it can not be without great hazard to myself, and consequently inconvenient for thee to desire it. I sufficiently know the malice which some men bear me, and how much they would rejoice to have me in their power, so that it is my duty to endeavour to prevent their wishes as much as I can. And seeing all my friends are against my venturing home, it is indiscretion in me to attempt it, and fondness in thy nearest relations to importune me to it. I would not be driven to goe abroad again, which I shall be necessitated unto if thou wilt not be satisfied without my company while I am here. These things can not hold long, and it is better to preserve ourselves till better times than cast away ourselves through impatience. And I can say, if I put any value upon my life, it is as much for thy sake and my children's as for any worldly respect

whatsoever. As to thy continuing in the lodgings, I refer it to thee to do as thou pleasest, and acquiesce in thy not giving warning at Lady-day. My dear, pardon my freedom with thee, and believe that I am more troubled that I can not every day see thee, than thou art that I do not. God keep and restore thee to
THINE."

Five days later he writes again :—

"MY DEAREST,—It is no little matter of joy to me that thou receivest benefit by the use of any For it would be the greatest mercy I am capable of in this world, to see thee restored to the use of thy leg. As to that concerning a bill of Mr. Hodges', it is true I received a paper just before I went away, but being crossing the Exchange when it was put into my hand, I would not look into it nor discourse with the person that gave it to me. It is long since Mr. Hodges wrought for me, and I offered 20 times to pay him, but he always refused to take a farthing. However, it seems, the account being entered into his books, his executors think fit to demand it. To whom I would have thee say, that thou can do nothing in it till you have spoken with me, for you neither have nor ever saw the bill. As to the people at Wapping, I do not think it convenient to write to them, but you may tell them that I freely leave them to do as they think best. For if they be willing to part with their interest in me, I do readily surrender all my right and claims in them. And as it will be a great ease to my mind to be discharged from all obligation unto them, so I shall heartily rejoice to see them settled under the oversight of some wise, learned, and discreet man. My dear, I long to see thee, but dare not fix the time, lest, being forced to disappoint thee, it should cause thee trouble and grief. I am very well, and walk as much in my chamber as I can, as being willing to preserve myself for thee and the children.
THINE OWN.

" March 8, 84. "

“MY DEAR HEART,—The gentleman that came to see thee the last week judgeth the obstruction of your cure to proceed as much from the scurvy as from any cause whatsoever, and therefore adviseth to the anti-scorbuticall drink, which I entreat thee to get prepared, and use according to the prescription here enclosed. And lest money should be low with thee, I have sent thee 5 guineas, hoping in a little time to afford thee a more considerable sum. After you have made use of that drink, I would that then thou shouldest go into the country, but not by thy own name, and let none in the town know whither thou goest, for both these are needful to be attended unto, in order to my coming the more safely to see or be with thee. Unless my children give me a visit to-day, I know not conveniently when they can, for I think of changing my harbour to-night. I thank God I enjoy my health, notwithstanding my want of exercise, nor is anything wanting to my satisfaction in this condition, but that I cannot enjoy thee. And therefore want nothing that, with the blessing of God, may promote the return of thy strength. And seeing I am absent not out of choice but necessity, bear that providence not only with Patience but cheerfulness, for in so doing thou wilt glorify God, have peace in thyself, and greatly oblige, my dearest,

THINE.

“April 5, '83.”

“MY DEAREST,—I am glade Sir Rob^t hath offered you the convenience of his house for a season, which I would have you embrace. I will see you if God will, before you goe. And forasmuch as he desires to speak with me, I have appointed where to meet him at night. The minister that sent to enquire where I am is one I exceedingly desire to speak with, and therefore tell him. But unless he come before to-morrow night I remove to another place.

THINE.

“April 10, '83.”

The hospitable Sir Robert was Sir Robert Rich, who had acquired a large fortune as a city merchant, and was the owner of a property at Navestock in Essex, where he had built a mansion known as the Brick House. Before the end of the month Mrs. Ferguson went down to Navestock, but previously her husband wrote thus :—

“MY DEAREST,—Mr. Shephard not having been with me since I came from home, I could not conveniently send to thee, and besides expected dayly to hear from thee. I thank God I am well and hitherto safe, tho’ I am forced to be very private, and to lye very close. Yet I would not have thee be solicitous, but committ my protection to God by prayer. I was oppressed in my mind with variety of cares and thoughts, that I could not carry it with that freedom and cheerfulness as I ought to have done when I was last at home. But you must pdon. [?] that amongst many other things, seeing thou mayst assure thyself that, whatever is wanting in the exterior and formal part, there is none in England that hath a husband who more sincerely loves her, and concerned for her welfare than I am for thine. Lest thou shouldst be straitened in money, I have sent thee 10 guineas, which I received from a friend since I saw thee. And therefore, I pray thee, want nothing, for I doubt not but God will provide for us, and restore us again to the free enjoyment of one another. God keep thee to THINE.

“April 16, ’83.”

The next letter, which bears the date of 21st April, is addressed inside “To Mrs. Ferguson,” and on the outside “To my Lady Rich at the Brick House in Navestock. By the Ungar Coach from the Crown without Aldgate.”

“April 21, ’83.

“MY DEAREST,—I long to hear thou gott’st down, and how the air agrees with thee, and whether thou recoverest

strength in thy knee. For while I am so circumstanced that I can neither come to thee, nor look after any concerns, it would be a great comfort to have thee in a condition to come to me and attend our little affairs. The woman at whose house my books lye is about removing and letting her house, so that they must be taken from thence. In order to which it will be needful that thou send Frank up, and withal give thy advice where thou wouldest have them disposed. I think it were best to cause bring them to thy own lodgings, provided there be room where they may be safely bestowed ; but this I refer to thee as best able to judge in that matter. If Frank come up she will find me in the same place she left me, tho' I am not without some thoughts of removing for a season to some other abode. We have no news in town, but that several are committed this session, upon the 23 of Q. Eliz : for 20^l a month. Judg Dallin is turned out, and S^r F^r Within's put into his place, so that all things tend to the taking away of the Charter. However, let us wait patiently, and not fret ourselves because of evildoers, for in due time judgment will return unto righteousness. My service to my Lady, with my love to my children.—I am, dearest,

“ ENTIRELY THINE.”

“ MY DEAREST,—I am sorry to hear that thou receivest so little benefit by the country aire, but yet I would not have thee despond, seeing everything requires time. But I am more afflicted to find that thou grieveest so much, for that can neither relieve thee nor me, and besides will retard thy recovery. I propose ere long to goe into the country for some time, but of that thou shalt know no [?] more by the next. My information as to the woman's letting her house is false, so that I have ordered Frank to forbear removing my books. If they may but continue there till Midsummer, who can tell but by that time I may dispose both of myself

and them without either fear or danger. There is nothing worth communicating from hence unless that the Torys grow every day more barbarous and insolent. The girl will tell you what bustle hath been in the City this night, occasioned by the arresting my Lord Mayor and the Aldermen at the suite of Mr. Papillon and Mr. Duboys. Give my unfeigned service to my Lady, with acknowledgments for all her kindnesses. Remember me to my child, and tell her I love her. The only way of testifying thy love to me is in cherishing thyself, and comforting thyself cheerfully under the providence of God, to whose care, grace, and mercy I commit thee, and am, my dear,

WHOLLY THINE.

“ *Ap.* 25, '83.

“ Burn this after you have read it.”

“ MY DEAR HEART,—Thine came safe to hand and wonderfully refreshed me, through the hopes thou entertainst of recovering the use of thy knee. And seeing thou find'st the air so beneficial to thee in that matter, I would have thee against thou comest from thence, think of making provision of lodgings in some other place, and that where thou mayst enjoy the conversation of friends as well as the advantage and pleasure of the country. I own myself exceedingly obliged to Sir R. and my Lady, for the respects and kindness to thee at this season, and shall always remember it as the best circumstance as well as most signal favour that could be shewn me. My affairs detain me still in this town, but I purpose to leave it this week, though it will be but for a little while. There offers nothing here worth communicating save that the King is designing for sea with five or six frigates, and thinks of viewing the coast all along to Plimouth. My Ld. Justice Saunders hath not been on the bench these two days, being indisposed again. Hetherington

is condemned in 10,000*l.* for a scandalum against the Duke of Ormond. What will become of the Charter is not known, Polxfen having strangely discouraged the judges by an excellent argument for it. The Lord be with and bless thee and my children.

THINE.

"May 5th, '83."

"MY DEAR HEART,—I am glade to hear thou art in hopes of recovering thy strength, but if you do not find that relief by the aire which you expect, you must be sure not to lose the season for the Bath, and I think the middle of June will be the best time, for if thou delay'st longer, thou wilt hardly endure the heat in traveling. I continue still in town, tho' very closs and concealed, and, I thank God, without any inconvenience to my health. Let neither thoughtfulness about me or anything else so trouble thee as to hinder and retard thy cure. Sir Robert hath been pleased to give me a visite, and hath promised to see me before he goes out of town. There is nothing material offers here, but that they goe on at the old rate, only mend their pace, which I hope will bring them the sooner to their journey's end. God give us faith and patience for [that he is to come will come to his reward, will be with — ?]. My service to my Lady. Dearest heart,

THINE.

"May 9, '83."

"May 15, 83.

"MY DEAREST—I thought Sir Robert would have called upon [me] on Saturday before he went out of town, and thereupon adjourned writing by the coach till it was too late. However, I saw him on Fryday, as I suppose he told you, and that he left me well. If thou findest benefit by the aire, I could be content that thou shouldst stay there till near the time of their departing for Suffolk, otherwise I would have

CHAPTER VI.

1683.

FERGUSON AND THE ASSASSINATION PLOT.

WHEN Ferguson arrived from Holland the assassination plotters were busy, but the insurrection scheme awaited the result of Smith's journey. It would seem that the assassination sank out of sight as the preparations for the rising advanced, for West mentions that some of the later meetings were wholly devoted to the insurrection; but it is not always easy to distinguish between what relates to the one and what refers to the other, as contemplated in the City. Throughout the spring the assassins met sometimes at West's chambers, and sometimes at taverns and coffee-houses, where they were joined by others who were not fully in the secret, but in whose presence a great deal of seditious speech and veiled allusion was indulged in. A whole vocabulary of feigned terms was invented to cover the dark design. The assassination was spoken of as "the lopping point," or "striking at the head," the insurrection was called "the General Point;" the King and the Duke were termed "Slavery and Popery," the "Black bird and the Goldfinch," or the "Captain and Lieutenant;" blunderbusses, muskets, and pistols were described as swanquills, goosequills, and crowquills, and "innocent terms of the excellent profession of the common laws of England" were also "abused to cover their horrid designs against his Majesty's person and Government." The genius of West suggested that "a deed

of bargain and sale, or lease and release, should be executed to bar both him in possession and him in remainder ;” and indeed some disguise of this sort was necessary where men chattered so freely in taverns of desperate deeds. Various methods of effecting their purpose were suggested, but the only one that was fixed on with any certainty was a revival of the old design, to be carried out at the Rye-House as the King passed it on his way to or from Newmarket in the month of March. A sudden fire at Newmarket caused the royal party to return sooner than was expected, and was considered, when the conspiracy was revealed, as a special interposition of Providence. The plotters were not ready, the plan fell through, and appears never to have been definitely resumed. But so startling and apparently so consistent was the story told by the informers, that it seemed to loyal men as if the royal brothers had only escaped by a miracle, and the dramatic failure of the nefarious design only exposed the conspirators to greater execration. Popular opinion and Court historians fixed on Ferguson as the most relentless and determined of the band, and wherever history has given credit to the scheme it has pilloried him as its author. And certainly it seemed as if history and opinion could not be far wrong in the light of the remarks that are recorded as having fallen from his lips. He is said to have remarked “that the action was too good to have the Papists carry away the honour of it,” that “it was never thought injustice to shoot or set traps for wolves or tigers,” and that “it was a glorious work; that it would be an admonition to all princes to take heed how they oppressed their subjects; that he hoped to see the fact rewarded by a Parliament, and the actors in it have the honour of statues erected to them and the title of ‘Preservers of their country.’” Other observations are related as proofs of his “impious virulency” and active participation in the darkest part of

the design. Some of these apply to the insurrection, and not to the assassination, and others were not uttered by him at all, though his habit of epigrammatic observation has caused them to be fathered upon him. The remark that the sanctity of the day was suited to the sanctity of the deed, referred not to the assassination, but to the day fixed for the outbreak of the insurrection in November. The story that "he offered in mockery to consecrate the blunderbuss that was to be fired into the royal carriage," resolves into the less startling one that Rumbold took the weapon from West, and, saying he would use it himself, suggested that Ferguson, as a clergyman, should consecrate it. The observation, when a proposal was made that the King and the Duke should be shot at the theatre, "that then they would die in their callings," seems to have come, not from him, but from Lord Howard, or from West. It is quite in keeping with Lord Howard's character, for that nobleman's significant reply to Monmouth, when the Duke told him of Ferguson's return from Holland, was—"Has John come to baptize my Lord?" Lord Grey records the same *not* slightly differently, and makes Howard say to Sir Thomas Armstrong, "Has he come to anoint John?"

Ferguson's real share in the dark design will be first considered simply on the evidence of his associates, and without reference in the meantime to his own account. He was not present at the earlier meetings of the assassination plotters, and even after his return from Holland he was absent from many of them; but there is no doubt that he was present at some at which the plan was discussed, and was fully conversant with it. The only direct evidence against him is that of two witnesses, and it is a curious fact that there has always been the equally direct evidence of two witnesses to the contrary, though it has escaped the notice of most historians. One of these witnesses made the

same statement both in his confession and on the scaffold, and the statement that came from the other was slurred over by the lawyers for the Crown. It is indeed remarkable that the only evidence which directly incriminates him as forwarding the assassination plot is that of Rumsey and West, of whom Burnet says that they were perpetually together at the time when the plot gradually leaked out, and "laid a story in which they resolved to agree it so well together that they should not contradict one another." In this they did not altogether succeed. The confession of Walcot "made West appear so black that the Court made no further use of him," and Rumsey contradicted himself. Ferguson had mentioned to Carstares the existence of such a design in autumn; he did the same to Shephard in spring, but does not seem to have done more. For six weeks in the later phases of the conspiracy Rumsey never saw him. But Rumsey did very distinctly declare that Ferguson and the rest, in several meetings since the beginning of February, pressed for having the men got ready that were to kill the King and the Duke; that Ferguson said he would provide the money, and told them at two later meetings that he had £600, and they might depend on him when they had got the forty or fifty men without which, as Rumsey himself says, Rumbold would not undertake it. He said that Ferguson had been asked as to the Duke of Monmouth's attitude if it succeeded; and when he reported that there was no saying such a thing to the Duke, he added "that yet they must all be ruined if it were not done." When asked whether the Duke would appear when it was done, he replied that a person would be there, but he must be excused for naming any names, and desired not to be pressed. "I told them," said Rumsey, "always they were not to trust to what Mr. Ferguson said, for he was so willing to have the most barbarous murder done, that he would say anything to encourage them to do it."

Rumsey also asserts that after the fire at Newmarket Ferguson sent for most of the plotters, and was earnest that Goodenough and Rumbold should get what men they could; that he could help with six, and that Rumbold should attempt it with what men he could get, but that it was given over then because neither arms nor horses were ready. Ferguson then promised to get the £600 ready for the next opportunity, whether at the Play-House, or on the road to Hampton Court or Windsor. He said that persons were out looking for a fit place, and that, if not done before, all things should be ready for the next journey to Newmarket, as horses bought and arms kept in readiness. West then undertook to buy the arms, and Ferguson promised to pay for them; but when West came to him and asked for his money, he told him that he had not received the money from a friend. It was not, in fact, repaid to West till about the end of May. Ferguson told West that he should send Rumbold to Major Wildman for the money, but on his doing so Wildman was out of town. A few days after Ferguson paid West £100 in gold, telling him he had just received it from Mr. Charlton, whom West passed as he entered; and, a fortnight before all was over, he told Rumsey that £3000 was raised for horses, but did not mention the source from which it came.

When West desired him to go to Ferguson on one occasion, Rumsey says that he refused, "for the said Ferguson undertook much, and did nothing but promise what he could not do." Among other things, he undertook that a declaration should be ready; and on another occasion he undertook to compare a project of government drawn up by West and Wade, which Rumsey gave to him, with one that Colonel Sidney had drawn, and "reduce them into an entire one." One other significant incident reported by Rumsey has an important bearing on the relations and aims of the

conspirators. He says that, on the Sunday evening after the fire at Newmarket, Sir Thomas Armstrong came to him and said that he had just left Ferguson, who hoped, in spite of the sudden return, to have men ready in time. Sir Thomas asked Rumsey to go with him to Ferguson's lodgings, who repeated the same statement, but said that they wanted money, Mr. Charlton not being at hand. Sir Thomas then asked Rumsey to lend some, and, on their persuasion, he drove in Sir Thomas's coach to his own house, and brought back forty guineas, which Sir Thomas said he would see repaid. "Several times after," says Rumsey, "he told me Ferguson had my money, and wondered I would not go to him to receive it."

West's story is given at great length, and, like Oates, he was always ready with further revelations. He was a clever and witty, though an unprincipled man, and told his tale well in the witness-box, with some artistic embellishments that do not appear in the original informations. The colours even in them are heightened as the *rôle* of informer becomes more familiar, and it is in his tenth information that the dramatic touch is introduced about the skinning of the judges; while he reserves for the Scottish trial, perhaps as more suited for the consumption of the country, the little dash that completes the picture, representing Ferguson as having a sermon ready to be preached on the occasion of the assassination.

He declares that Ferguson told him of "the more compendious way" before his flight to Holland; that after his return they had several discourses about the assassination, and the opportunity for it on the Newmarket journey; and that they, with Rumbold, Goodenough, and Rumsey, discussed the method at his chambers. None of them but Rumbold were to act in person; but Ferguson, Rumbold, and Goodenough undertook to procure men to make the attempt,

“ which persons were to, be forty at least, and fifty if they could procure them.” At a meeting in his chambers after the fire, it was decided that “ the attempt should be wholly laid aside.” It was afterwards agreed that arms should be bought to be in readiness for any occasion, and West undertook to secure them. Ferguson was to provide £600 for horses, but “ he not bringing the money, no horses were bought.” West once asked him “ what care was taken to justify the same ? ” if the assassination were carried out ; and the reply was that care would be taken about it, and that the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and most of the Lieutenancy, should be secured. But when West asked what persons were concerned, Ferguson told him to ask no questions, for things would be managed well. West asked again whether there was a declaration ready, and Ferguson replied that it would be printed ready to be dispersed. When asked further how it should be done, he answered it was assuredly so, but he must ask no questions. West told the same story as Rumsey about the payment for the arms which he purchased, and said that Rumsey told him Ferguson had borrowed forty guineas from him on the Saturday or Sunday before the King’s return from Newmarket, “ in order to set the design on foot, but did nothing in it,” and had since repaid thirty, if not the whole forty, to him. At a meeting at the George and Vulture Tavern, after the King’s return, the arms to be bought were settled, and Ferguson said some one was employed to see if the assassination could be managed between Hampton Court and Windsor ; but though West pressed him, he never gave any further account of it, “ being then wholly intent on managing the Scots insurrection.” Ferguson pressed West to meet both Sir Thomas Armstrong and the Duke of Monmouth, but on both occasions the barrister refused. He also asked West to speak to Goodenough about meeting Sir Thomas Armstrong, and

Sir Thomas and Goodenough had several meetings, at which they discussed the design of raising the City.

After Ferguson returned from Holland, West reverted to a subject that much exercised his mind—the attitude of the Duke of Monmouth to the murderers of his father, and the chances of his hanging them all. He says that formerly Ferguson had replied, “What if I get it under his hand that he shall not?”—but now demanded, “Whether that were fit to be proposed to the Duke?” West then said, “If he durst not propose it, he thought other men ought not to venture upon it;” and Ferguson rejoined that “he had mentioned something concerning the King to the Duke of Monmouth, but not assassinating him,” to which the Duke answered somewhat sternly, “You must look upon me in the capacity of a son.” “Which answer,” says West, “for some time damp’t the design, and always clogg’d it.”

West observed that there was little or no preparation for the attempt when the King was at Newmarket in spring, and went to Ferguson and told him so. The reply was that he should have a sum of money for it when all things were fixed, but not else, for a sum had been deposited in a man’s hand on the previous occasion which was not returned, and there was no asking for such money again. The person who had received it was Richard Goodenough, and “he called Ferguson fool” for returning some money he had received for the same purpose, while Lord Shaftesbury had bitterly complained of Goodenough’s conduct. West also proposed to Ferguson that some of the Duke’s servants should be engaged in the attempt, but Rumbold did not care to act with them, and was told by Ferguson or Rumsey that Sir Thomas Armstrong offered to engage if Colonel Rumsey would, but the Colonel refused. A fortnight before the time fixed for the attempt on the Newmarket journey, Ferguson told West that the Duke of Monmouth and some

Lords were to dine in the City to be ready when the news came. He also told West that some preferment was designed for him, and asked him to give a note of "the lawyers he thought fit to be, and would accept of being judges," but West only "smiled at his vanity, and gave no such account." He declares that Ferguson told him that "some Non-conforming ministers had told him they suspected he was driving on a design to assassinate the King and the Duke, and begged of him to desist, for it would bring a reproach upon the Protestant religion, whatever the event might be, and that he was forced to assure them there was no such thing intended; 'But alas!' said he, 'they are weak, silly men who cannot distinguish between destroying a prince merely for his opinion in religion, and destroying tyrants who design to overthrow the laws, religion, and all civil rights, and hate the nation. It is a pious, glorious action, and such as will teach all princes to use their subjects kindly,' or to that effect." According to West, Walcot for a long time refused to take part in the assassination, but "at length, by the persuasion of Ferguson, as he believed," was induced to command the party that was to attack the Guards. When he agreed to engage, he desired that his name might be concealed, whatever the effect of it proved, "whereupon Ferguson replied, 'No man ought to be ashamed of it, for 'tis a glorious action, and such as I hope to see rewarded by a Parliament, and that the actors in it shall have statues erected to them, with inscriptions of *Liberatores Patriæ*.'" He also said that the King often crossed St. James's Park at night in a chair, without attendants, and that it would be easy for two men with swords to despatch him; and told West that Dr. Owen and Mr. Collins, an Anabaptist or Independent preacher, were "the most sensible ministers about town, and both of opinion that the intended assassination and insurrection

were both lawful and necessary, and that Colonel Owen was privy to them."

Such is West's evidence in regard to Ferguson's share in the assassination scheme as given in his informations. He repeated the most of his information at the State trials, and where he varies, it is always to the exculpation of Mr. West and the incrimination of some one else. At Walcot's trial he declared that Ferguson had the management and conduct of the assassination in October, and detailed the plans for carrying out the deed in spring. He added that, at the meeting after the Newmarket fire, Walcot remarked, "I believe God shows His disapprobation of the thing," and Ferguson observed, "I believe He reserves them for worse punishment." When West mentioned in the witness-box what Ferguson had said about the statues, and the inscription of *Liberatores Patriæ*, Serjeant Jeffreys asked, "What was this Ferguson?" West replied, "He is an Independent parson." "He preached excellent gospel," said Jeffreys.

Two years later, when a witness in the Scots process of forfeiture against Ferguson, West added to his tale circumstances which it seems unlikely that he should have previously forgotten. He declared that "Ferguson owned to him he was engaged in both designs, and that he had provided his quota or number of men for executing the said assassination, but other persons who had engaged to procure more men had failed to do so, which he lamented as a great misfortune;" that "he very eagerly promoted the assassination in the spring;" that "he offered to be one of the assassinatees himself;" that he declared "it was never accounted injustice to shoot or set traps for wolves or tigers;" that he told him he "had a declaration prepared to justify the fact, and a sermon suitable to the occasion;" and that on the miscarriage he remarked, "that the measure of their iniquities was not yet full, and God had reserved them for His

own vengeance," yet endeavoured to get arms ready and the design prosecuted again. Bourn mentions that West once told him on the Exchange that "the Lords were a parcel of rogues and Ferguson a credulous fool, for that they would trick upon us and the Scots too; that he had laid out a parcel of money for arms, and that he could not get it again."

Such are the statements of the leading assassination plotters themselves. They show that Ferguson was trusted by them with the financial management of the undertaking, and that, from their point of view, he mismanaged it. They indicate that what had been a long-cherished design missed fire at the critical moment, and that afterwards, though there was a good deal of talk, nothing serious was done. If Ferguson was the "real author of the sanguinary scheme," he showed remarkable remissness in prosecuting it, even as it is disclosed by the chief witnesses of its existence.

But there is direct evidence of something very different from remissness. At the trial of Walcot, Bourn, with whom Ferguson had lodged, and to whom he had talked freely, was put in the witness-box; and in the course of his examination he was asked, "Did you hear anything in general of assassinating the King?" "I did hear of it, my Lord," he replied, "when the thing was over; and, as to his question,¹ I did never hear him discourse of that matter. I understood the design was prevented." "Who did you understand that from?" asked the Lord Chief-Justice. "From one Mr. Row," replied Bourn, "and Mr. Ferguson." He was immediately asked some other questions as to the "lopping point," and "taking off the King and Duke," his answers to which might refer to information of what had been previously proposed; but the distinct statement he had made was slurred over, and he was never asked, "By whom, or how, or when was it prevented?"

Some time after the discovery of the plot, James Hollo-

¹ *I.e.* a question put by the prisoner.

way, of Bristol, one of the fugitives, was seized in the West Indies, and sent home. He made a very full confession, from which it appeared that he had come to London in April on business connected with the insurrection, and had been let by West into the secret of the Newmarket design, which decidedly shocked him. The next day he had his first interview with Ferguson, who talked to him about the insurrection; but, "by all his discourse at that time, Holloway could not perceive that he knew anything of the Newmarket design." In May Holloway again came to town, and West again spoke to him about the Newmarket design; but, when asked who were to have acted it, "could give but a slender answer." He "could or would name but two men, who were Rumbold and his brother;" and when asked, "Who were for this design?" he named Colonel Rumsey and Good-enough, and, as far as Holloway could remember, no more. Holloway and Wade found Rumsey to be wholly of West's opinion, and the idea displeased them very much. "We found," said Holloway, "it was carried on by them contrary to the knowledge or approbation of those who managed the general design." "After this," he continues, "we went to Ferguson, who told us how things stood: we then found that he knew of both designs, but was only for the insurrection."¹

Holloway's frank confession did not obtain a pardon for him, and at his execution he very distinctly repeated his statements as to the assassination. He "looked upon it as a business not likely to take any effect at all, for I never could find above five that were concerned in it." "I knew," he repeated, "that design that was carried on by Rumsey and West was a very heinous design; but I believe they would

¹ In his confession, made after Monmouth's rebellion, Wade confirmed the accuracy of Holloway's narrative. He declared that he (Wade) had left the nation because of "Rumsey swearing him to be in the plot to kill the King, which he protests he never was, but was in that insurrection for the redressing of grievances; the bottom of it was for the Bill of Exclusion, and to declare Monmouth Prince of Wales."

not have found many in England that would have been for it." A little later the Sheriff asked him, "You were saying you knew the names of five. Who were they that were concerned in that matter?" "I have declared them," said Holloway, "to his Majesty!" "Did you know Ferguson?" asked the Sheriff. "I knew him, sir, but I knew Ferguson to be against any such design, and indeed we did look upon it as a thing that could come to no effect."

Upon this Burnet observes, "These (the five) were West, Rumsey, Rumbold, and his brother. The fifth person is not named in the printed relation. Some said it was Ferguson, others said it was Goodenough"—an extraordinary statement for the Bishop of Salisbury to make, in the teeth of Holloway's declaration on the scaffold, that Ferguson was against any such design, and his equally clear statement in the confession, printed with the other information in the Appendix to Sprat's "True Account," "that West named Rumsey and Goodenough." It is sufficient to make us receive with caution Burnet's other references to his north country compatriot.

At his trial and execution Walcot denied his share in the assassination plot, especially ridiculing the idea attributed to him of fighting the Guards, while others killed the King, as distinguishable in any way from the act of murder. He "blamed only some men that, in reality and truth, were deeper engaged than I, and came in as witnesses against me, who swore me out of my life to save their own," and was distinct in his incrimination of Rumsey and West, especially the latter, who perpetually discoursed of the assassination, and indeed used to Walcot the expression "that they would die in their callings."

Two years later, after the dispersion of Argyle's following, Richard Rumbold was taken prisoner while endeavouring to make his way to England, and brought to Edinburgh

to meet his doom. In the Court of Justiciary he confessed the charge against him with one exception. He "owned it all, saving that part of having designed the King's death, and desired all present to believe the words of a dying man, he never directly or indirectly intended such a villainy—that he abhorred the very thoughts of it, . . . and that he was sure the truth would one day be made manifest to all men." He repeated the same statement on the scaffold. Fox lays very great stress on this denial as shaking the whole foundations of the story of the Rye-House Plot; but much as the circumstances seem to have been falsified and exaggerated by Rumsey and West, the details of the scheme are such and its main features are so far supported by Keeling and other witnesses, that it cannot have been entirely fabulous. Burnet records that Rumbold did not deny he had heard much talk at West's chambers about waylaying the King and Duke, and had said it could be easily executed at his own house, on which a good deal of discourse had followed. The only solution of the problem which Macaulay can suggest is that, as an old soldier of the Civil Wars—a soldier who had sat on his horse as one of the guards who surrounded the scaffold at Whitehall on the dark day when a monarch's head rolled in the dust—Rumbold distinguished, in the manner attributed to Walcot, between ordinary murder and a military ambushade. The solution is not satisfactory, and it is interesting to compare it with that suggested by the contemporary of Rumbold whom Macaulay has denounced.

The result of a consideration of the contemporary evidence of the Plot is to discredit the evidence of Rumsey and West, and render more than doubtful the part assigned by them to Ferguson in connection with it. We are now, therefore, in a position to test the probability of his own account, and to apply it to the facts connected with the assassination project as hitherto disclosed.

CHAPTER VII.

1683.

FERGUSON AND THE ASSASSINATION PLOT—HIS OWN STORY.

TAKING up the thread of Ferguson's narrative where it was dropped on his flight to Holland, we find that he had not been long abroad before Sir Thomas Armstrong and his friend discovered that the design for destroying the King was not only resumed, but so far advanced that they thought it could not be obstructed. They did not think it safe to disclose themselves to Rumsey, who was "the only person of that tribe with whom they had any intimacy," and they were not acquainted with Rumbold, who, "though reckoned to be in the head of that contrivance," was the "least violent in carrying it on," and most inclined to listen to reason, without taking offence or betraying those who spoke to him to "the furious folk." Sir Thomas and his friend were shrewd enough to see that Ferguson's influence among the plotters would be greater if their request seemed to bring him from Holland, and therefore Sir Thomas went to Rumsey and represented how necessary it was to have him in London by the time that the Scottish commissioners arrived. So, on receipt of letters from Shephard and West, Ferguson came over, and arrived three or four days before the Court went to Newmarket. On Friday, Sir Thomas Armstrong visited him, and told him of the projects for the insurrection and for the assassination, "in which some were more violent than ever." After hearing from Shephard what his friends

were doing, Ferguson obtained an interview with Rumsey and West. He found they had no hope of a general rising, for the principles of those concerned disagreed, the managers moved slowly, and the Scots had not arrived. There was no money provided, and without it the Scots could not act. The assassination plotters were bitter in their invectives against those whose action seemed only likely to result in ensnaring men, and went so far as to declare it would be no injustice to redeem their own lives at the expense of theirs. They maintained that nothing remained practicable but the "lopping point;" that it was imparted to too many to remain long undetected, and that it had received approbation from so many that no one would be strong enough to punish it. From this, and more of the same strain, Ferguson realised that many had heard of it without condemning it, and that "considering the humours of the plotters, and their bigotry in that design," it would be very difficult to deal with them. He consulted Sir Thomas Armstrong, and, as the Duke of Monmouth was anxious to see him, they delayed taking active steps till the Duke and he had met. Though Ferguson knew Rumsey too well to think it possible to dissuade him, he thought "that the putting some testimony of confidence and respect upon him might both keep an esteem in him for the Duke of Monmouth, and render him the less jealous of himself." He therefore suggested that the Duke and he should meet at Rumsey's house, "being confident that Rumsey would express so much of the breeding of a gentleman as not to obtrude himself further into the Duke's private conversation with any person than he should be called and invited." This being agreed to, Ferguson "attended twice there upon the Duke," told him what he had learned, and received from him an account of the steps taken towards a general insurrection in England and Scotland. Monmouth said that it would be through no fault

of his if it did not succeed, declared his abhorrence of the assassination, and assured Ferguson that he expected him to use all his art and diligence to prevent it in such a way that "no man might know of his having been told that there either was, or had been, such a design on foot."

The other person in the secret had not yet returned from the country, and Ferguson was anxious to meet Rumbold and the rest, which he had the opportunity of doing at West's chambers in the Temple. He soon saw that they were far from being ready to execute the design, and "that Mr. Rumbold was less attached unto, and colder in it, than he had been represented. . . . For whereas in October he had required only the assistance of twenty persons for the execution of it, he now refused to undertake it under the number of fifty, and withal insisted upon having some persons of quality brought so far as to approve it." After three meetings in one week, it was no nearer completion than it had been at first, and Ferguson plainly saw that his whole difficulty would be in covering his friends and himself from the resentment of West and Rumsey. Taking Sir Thomas Armstrong and the other person into consultation again, it was decided that they should treat Rumsey with all familiarity, address, and confidence, while Ferguson was to ascertain how Rumbold had become so cool on the matter. Both carried out what they had settled, and Ferguson met Rumbold alone, and discussed with him seriously the dangers of the scheme, pointing out that the very naming of it to men of rank would be looked upon as a design on their lives and fortunes. Rumbold replied that he was not only loath to move in it himself, but had been dissuaded by the person who, of all men, had the greatest ascendancy over him, and who had first proposed it. This person was the very man who had first mentioned it to Ferguson, "under the cant of killing outlying stags and beasts of spoil," and

he was able to fathom the reasons of the change in his sentiments. For there was a great friendship between him and the person who acted along with Sir Thomas Armstrong and Ferguson, and he had been introduced by Colonel Sidney into a great familiarity not only with the Earl of Essex and Lord Russel, but also with the Duke of Monmouth; was "privately consulted upon all occasions, applied to as the chief oracle, and intrusted to prepare and draw up a remonstrance of the grievances and oppressions of the kingdom, and how far the King had invaded and subverted the laws even to the changing of the Constitution." So far Ferguson: there is one man among the conspirators, and apparently one man only, to whom this description directly applies. Major Wildman was the friend of Sidney; he was not one of the six, but he was constantly consulted, and his name frequently appears in the arrangements for the insurrection and the negotiations with the Scots. He had spent a long imprisonment in the Tower in Cromwell's time in acquiring a complete mastery of medicine and the laws and history of England, and from henceforth he was trusted by, and in communication with, the Duke of Monmouth. And a passage in West's evidence completely fits in with and confirms Ferguson's account. He says that "Mr. Rumbold told him not long since that Major Wildman had showed him a paper in the nature of a declaration or remonstrance, which he intended to have printed and dispersed among the people at the time of the intended insurrection; and that he, the said Wildman, had formerly encouraged the said Rumbold in the attempt on the King and Duke in their way to or from Newmarket, but afterwards seemed to discourage it." Very probably Wildman was the original author of the project of government which Ferguson, according to Rumsey, said Sidney had drawn up. At any rate, this casual statement by West of

a matter that seemed to have no direct bearing on the theory of the plot, to maintain which his whole story was directed, is the most valuable testimony to the authenticity and accuracy of Ferguson's narrative.

Ferguson replied to Rumbold, magnifying the wisdom of his friend and the zeal he had always displayed for "the preservation of civil rights and liberties," and remarking that, if he had changed his mind, he must be convinced the design was impracticable. From that day forward, he affirms, there was not one step really made towards its execution, and all said or seemingly done by Mr. Rumbold was to cover himself and his friends from the revenge of those who were violent in favour of it. "And therefore," he observes, "if Mr. Rumbold disowned at his execution the having intended the perpetration of such a fact, according as the public prints and the speech published in his name have declared to the world, it is no more, for aught I know, than what is true, nor did he, in my opinion, either lie or dissemble in saying so."

Ferguson "positively affirms" that if the King had remained a month at Newmarket, instead of being driven away by the fire, he would have come back in as much security as he did. For of the fifty men that Rumbold insisted on, he never could hear of above six or seven that were willing to engage. Some of these, on being mentioned by West and Goodenough, were objected to by others. There was neither provision of horses nor arms made for them or for any one else. For the arms bought by West were purchased after the danger was over, and without Ferguson knowing till after it was done. West would never have been reimbursed but to silence his clamour, to hinder him betraying what he knew, and on the chance of using them speedily in the insurrection. The arms were not of much importance without the horses, and these could not be bought

without West expending a larger sum than he was likely to do, especially in view of the difficulty he had experienced in getting back what he had already spent. Ferguson thus concludes his manuscript and the narrative of his share in the Rye Plot: "And as this is the substance of all that occurs to my memory relating to that design, so I do acknowledge that among those embarked in it, there were divers other ways proposed for executing of it, besides that at Rye House; but most of them were in raillery, and all of them vain and ridiculous. I do withal confess that they whose real aim was to hinder and divert it, were always the brightest of the company, while they were among the bigots, in declaiming against tyranny, in representing tyrants under the most loathsome and opprobrious characters, and in mentioning those with glorious eulogies who had avenged mankind upon oppressors, and vindicated their countries from slavery. And as they found the usefulness of it, both in screening themselves thereby from those men's jealousies, and in the being better enabled to render their designs abortive, as well as to penetrate into them, so they were careful to say nothing but what was agreeable to their own principles, and which they still fancy themselves in a condition to justify by all the topicks peculiar to that theme. Nor were there any persons more forward than they in promoting an insurrection, and that not only because they judged it to be a means of allaying the heats of men in prosecuting the other design, but because they thought it expedient as well as lawful, abstracting from that consideration and motive. And had I been as really engaged in the one part of the conspiracy as I was in the other, no fear of danger on the one hand, or of opprobry on the other, should make me either extenuate or disown it. And could I purchase the King's favour, as well as my life, by detecting this to him that I have discovered to you, I would abhor the doing

of it; and rather choose to fall under all the effects of his power and wrath than to escape them by so mean and base a thing."

This old manuscript, written by one so deeply engaged in, and thoroughly conversant with, the details of the conspiracy, is a contribution of importance to the literature of the Rye Plot. Not only is it of vital importance in estimating the character of the author, as interesting a personage as any of the minor figures in history; it is of great value in correcting or confirming our impressions of others. It adds another to the errors of Shaftesbury's career, but it certainly raises somewhat our opinion of the Duke of Monmouth as a man of capacity and sense. It shows the Duke as he appeared in early days to his political associates, and confirms the deduction to be drawn from other sources, that his inconstancy and inconsistency were those of a mind that easily took on for the time the colour of the company he was in. And it has a very suggestive bearing on the future relations between Monmouth and Ferguson, and on the value to be attached to the extracts which Eachard gives from a lost manuscript by Ferguson upon Monmouth's rebellion. Ferguson's letters to his wife harmonise with his theological works, this manuscript harmonises with his letters, and that quoted by Eachard might very well have been a continuation of this. It is important to observe that, as far as the Rye Plot is concerned, there is substantial accord between Ferguson's narrative and that of Lord Grey, and that, if in future their stories should differ, the past at any rate throws no discredit, but rather the reverse, upon Ferguson. Indeed, to use his own expression, "the character your Government has fixed upon me," at this period of his career, seems to have at once discounted anything he might say in future. It is therefore desirable to carefully consider how far his own manuscript is controverted, or receives undesigned confirmation from the

depositions of the witnesses to the plot; and I shall sum up the results of a careful examination of these depositions, as if he were standing at the bar, and it were my duty to address the jury.

These facts may be taken as indisputable: That Ferguson was engaged heart and soul in the scheme of a general rising, in which he wished to combine every element he could influence; that the Government at first classed him with Monmouth, Russel, and the conspirators of that stamp; that his presence at the meetings of the assassination plotters was far from regular—apparently only occasional; and that he seems to have been looked on by them, and evidently was, a negotiator who approached them as the agent, and from the standpoint, of those who desired no side issues to be imported into a national uprising. The question then comes to be, Does the evidence of the witnesses sufficiently support his own account of his conduct, or is it to be taken as proved, on the contrary, that he favoured both designs either concurrently or alternatively? If, indeed, the verdict which would be given upon this body of evidence, in answer to the latter alternative, is the Scotch one of “Not proven,” then his own account must be allowed to prevail; for, if the general opinion of half-informed individuals be hostile to his veracity, we have on the other side the character disclosed in his own letters, which more than displaces that indefinite rumour.

There are a number of witnesses—How, Barber, Lea, Hicks, Waller, Hone, Rouse, and Leigh—who say nothing about him, and several more who, on their testimonies already quoted, may be described as neutral upon the point of the assassination. These are Keeling, Shephard, Holms, Blaney, Whitlock, Walcot, Gordon of Earlston, Smith of Dunscore, and Lord Russel. Then there are Lord Howard of Escrick, who speaks of “dark hints” received from Ferguson; Carstares, who in one passage represents Ferguson as saying or insinu-

ating it would be necessary "to cut off a few," meaning the King and the Duke; and a remark reported by Bourn, which Ferguson is alleged to have made, that "nothing was to be expected from the rich old citizens, and therefore half a dozen of them must be taken out of their houses and hanged on their sign-posts, and their houses given as plunder to the mobile, and that would scare the rest," which may be supposed to be indicative of his cruel disposition. Sprat asserts that Monmouth confessed to his Majesty that "in all their debates Ferguson was always for cutting of throats, saying it was the 'most compendious way!'" If Monmouth said so, how black must have been his treachery! That the testimonies of so many who were directly engaged in the large conspiracy should be altogether silent on Ferguson's part in the assassination, is an element to be weighed on the other side; the remarks to Lord Howard and Carstares, whatever weight they might have if there was nothing against them, admit of another explanation when we know that such a design was in the air, and it is suggested that Ferguson was at the time engaged in tracing and traversing it. Bourn's observation loses force as applied to this particular fact when it is remembered that he was for long Ferguson's host, and, while taken into his confidence as to the general insurrection, was never solicited to join in the assassination scheme. Both it and the observation to Carstares may also be explained as referring to stern measures of public policy connected with an open and national insurrection. Next come the links afforded by the striking evidence of Holloway, "by which," according to Burnet, "the credit of the Rye Plot received a great blow," and Bourn's observation at Walcot's trial, which directly confirm Ferguson's own statement, and leave the case against him to rest upon the assertions of Rumsey and West, whose characters were not calculated to recommend, and whose personal interest and situation

were such as to cast considerable discredit on the accuracy of their testimony. A good many of the remarks they represent Ferguson as making may very well have referred as much to the insurrection as the assassination, and even in their depositions there are curious facts and turns of expression which support his own story.

Rumsey certainly says Ferguson "pressed for having the men ready for the assassination," that all must be ruined if it "were not done;" that he was ready for any "barbarous murder;" that, after the Newmarket miscarriage he sent for some of them, and was anxious that Rumbold should attempt it as soon as possible; and that he told them a declaration was ready to be published on the event. But against that is to be set the condition he stipulated when he told them they "might depend on him when they had got forty or fifty men"—a ridiculous number to carry out an assassination, which, to be successful, required to be done suddenly and without arousing previous suspicion; his reporting that "there was no saying such a thing to the Duke;" his story that there were persons already out viewing a suitable place for the attempt, of whose proceedings he never gave any subsequent account; the fact that the money was never forthcoming in time; the other fact that for six weeks Rumsey never saw Ferguson; and the conclusion to which Rumsey came that "Ferguson was not to be trusted," and that "he undertook much and did nothing but promise what he could not do."

It is also noteworthy that Rumsey, though meeting Ferguson at Lord Shaftesbury's, only heard of the original project from West after they had fled to Holland; that the date of the letter summoning Ferguson back is placed by Rumsey early in December, and by West in the middle of January, while the return to which it led took place in the middle of February. Again, Rumsey's evidence at Cornish's trial of the meeting at Shephard's is contradicted in impor-

tant points by Shephard and by Rumsey's own testimony in the case of Lord William Russel. It is also difficult to reconcile his accounts of the meetings after the return, and statements that Ferguson was not at some of them, with the evidence of West, and his correction of Rumsey as to the George and Vulture meeting. There is also an apparent contradiction between him and West as to when Ferguson's statement as to Monmouth's attitude to the assassination was made. Rumsey says that Rumbold and the rest asked Ferguson at their first meeting: West says that he himself did so before Ferguson left for Holland, but returned to the subject after he returned, and received the answer. The similarity of expression is so great, that it is hard to believe the two refer to separate inquiries on the same subject.

There remains only the evidence of West, and the first observation which it calls forth applies in a modified degree to that of Rumsey, for it is noticeable that both, as the *rôle* of witnesses becomes more familiar to them, add darker touches to the picture they present. Men who swore away the lives of innocent individuals for their own profit or preservation were unfortunately too common at the time, and there is much in the continually amplified information of West which leads to the belief that he was guided in his evidence, not so much by a strict regard for truth, as by a consideration of what would be most acceptable to the Government. He and Rumsey are the Oates and Bedloe of the Presbyterian plot. He states emphatically enough that Ferguson told him of the two designs, the insurrection and "the more compendious way," an expression which he seems to have used not as an argument, but as a description of the plan of others, which West, on his own showing, preferred; that there were several conversations between them, and various meetings at which the design of the assassination was discussed. Then there is Ferguson's statement as to the

former proposed attempt at the Guildhall; his alleged declaration about an invitation to the Duke of Monmouth and others to dine in the City on the night of the Newmarket journey; his conversation with the Nonconforming ministers, who endeavoured to dissuade, and the argument he is represented as addressing to them; the story that Walcot was only induced to engage "by persuasion of Ferguson," and the remark about the statues which Parliament was to erect; his undertaking to see for a conveniency of making the attempt between Hampton Court and Windsor; his remark as to its feasibility in St. James's Park; and, finally, the observation that Dr. Owen and Mr. Collins were the most sensible ministers about town, and both of opinion that the assassination was both lawful and necessary.

But even in West's evidence there are several passages which discredit the rest and favour the other theory. He too mentions that the persons to make the attempt on the King and Duke were to be "forty at least, and fifty if they could procure them;" that after the Newmarket episode it was agreed that "the attempt should be wholly laid aside;" and in the discourse with Ferguson, as to what was to be done to justify it when accomplished, Ferguson's reply clearly refers to the insurrection. He tells also that, on the Saturday or Sunday before the Newmarket journey, Ferguson borrowed a considerable sum from Rumsey—probably enough to keep Rumsey himself from providing the necessaries—"in order to set the same on work, but did nothing in it;" that Ferguson never made any report as to the feasibility of carrying out the design between Hampton Court and Windsor, though he was pressed to it by him and others, "being then wholly intent upon managing the Scotch insurrection;" and that Ferguson's report of Monmouth's declaration, "You must look upon me in the capacity of a son," "for some time damp't the design and always clogg'd it." Indeed, the endeavours he made to get

some of the assassination plotters to meet Monmouth and Sir Thomas Armstrong, to which more than one witness speaks, and the way in which we are able to supply Wildman's name from West's information, are strongly corroborative of Ferguson's own contention. His whole treatment of the money, the intrusting of which to his hands discredits the idea which Macaulay borrows from Burnet, that "those who had pecuniary transactions with him found him to be a mere swindler," as we have it from West as well as others, is quite in keeping; for the project of buying horses fell through on account of "Ferguson not bringing the money," and it is mentioned that "there was little or no preparation made" for carrying out the assassination on the occasion of the visit to Newmarket. The fact, too, that Ferguson placed himself in the position of being called a fool by Goodenough for his punctiliousness in returning money in circumstances in which Goodenough had made away with it, does not certainly seem like the conduct of a mere swindler, while he was careful to promise the money when the men were ready, "but not till then." Well as West's story was worked out, and artistically as it was told in the box, it is not free from direct exception, and it wants the circumstantial corroboration that is to be expected from Rumsey. In his information alluding to the discussion with Ferguson and Row before the flight to Holland, he declares his inability to remember particular passages; yet at Walcot's trial this discussion, continued at a tavern, and repeated at his own chambers, is given in great detail, as spreading over more than one occasion. And the time for these meetings was short; for it is limited by the 19th of November (or, according to the Attorney-General's correction, the 17th), and Shaftesbury and Ferguson fled on the night of the 19th. Not only do West and Rumsey contradict each other as to Ferguson's presence at the first meeting after the Newmarket journey,

about the place of which they differ—they differ also as to whether the exiles had returned when the King started for Newmarket; for West says that he discussed with Ferguson the perpetration of the deed, either on the way there or back, and Rumsey declared at Walcot's trial that when he and Ferguson came from Holland the King was then at Newmarket. It is clear that West's knowledge of the important parts of the insurrectionary design was almost wholly drawn from Ferguson; that he had no personal knowledge of the aristocratic leaders; and, indeed, belonged to a knot that regarded them with jealousy and disfavour. On his own evidence, Ferguson seems to have regarded him with some suspicion—and justly, for he was very inquisitive. Talkative, indiscreet, and a bit of a coward—for he early declared that he could take no personal part in fighting, and yet was the possessor of that curious garment for a man of sedentary habits and delicate health, a suit of silken armour—he seems to have been measured by the astute Scotsman as a dangerous confederate and a jealous confidant, and so treated. More than once he was told that he must ask no questions; Ferguson was “shy of naming persons of quality to him,” and, assuring him that if their strength was encouraging there would be no lack of men of position to take the lead, refused to name them “till there be occasion.” Perhaps some consciousness of this distrust, perhaps also the fact that Ferguson had thwarted West's own peculiar design, perhaps the more important fact that it was essential to lay the chief burden of that design on some one else's shoulders—and where could it so satisfactorily be laid as on the man known to be acquainted with both schemes, and the prime mover in the insurrection?—perhaps also West's peculiar antipathy to clergymen—for his coterie had strongly charged Holloway “not to say anything about the business to anybody in direct terms, but especially to any of the

ministers," and his own view was that "ministers were a parcel of rogues that had ruined the people ever since Constantine,"—all concurred in producing the energy with which he fathered all that was sanguinary upon Ferguson. Having taken up the *role* of informer, he was shrewd enough to know that the Government wanted matter of treason against the aristocratic malcontents, matter of charge against the Scottish correspondents, and matter of discredit against the whole Whig party—and here was the channel through which all this could be supplied. Ferguson was the link between the two bands of disaffected men, the link with Scotland, and the sole representative of the Nonconformist ministry—intimately connected with their greatest figure, Dr. Owen,—whom it was then high policy of State as well as cheap popularity to disparage. West was a man of sufficient cleverness to see this, and avail himself of it; of sufficient vanity to enjoy the distinction of exhibiting his large acquaintance with the full scope of the scheme at second-hand; and of sufficient vindictiveness to resent not being taken more into the secret and the experience that another was steadily working and completely trusted, while he was babbling of sedition in taverns, and enjoying that supremacy among the political reformers of coffee-houses which is the guerdon of unprincipled loquacity.

Standing alone, the testimony of Carstares would be easily explicable as really referring to stern measures of State in the crisis of a revolution, or possibly as the misunderstood report of what others than the speaker were hatching at the time. There remains no other evidence of Ferguson's advocacy of the assassination plot than the statements of Rumsey and West. Against these there may very well be put the statement of Bourn and the unambiguous declarations of Holloway. His fate was sealed when he spoke on the scaffold, and his utterances deserve the credit given to

men who have nothing to gain by falsehood in this world, and who are likely to speak truth on the threshold of the next. In the same awful circumstances Walcot's last words were equally damaging to Rumsey and West, and I prefer to believe those who had nothing to gain, and no character as informers to keep up. The result of the whole evidence is to clear the ground for Ferguson's explanation, and not to substantiate but to shatter the charge that he was "the real demon of the Assassination Plot." Probably he did use expressions which are sufficient to account for the opinion formed by most historians, unpossessed of the key to the mystery; some of them may have been to some extent satirical, and in others there may be a suspicion of deception; for the men with whom he was dealing, and whom it was his object to keep in hand, were desperadoes who declared their intention of slaughtering Monmouth himself if he stood in their way, of despatching even Papillon and Dubois if they declined to accept the office they would thrust upon them; who contemplated skinning judges, and massacring ministers of State. If by Ferguson's management the assassination was averted, he saved his country from a great calamity, and his party from an enduring stigma; with his life in his hand, he performed a service to Britain and the Whigs which merits a very different recompense than historians have yet bestowed.

From one point of view it might be asserted that he has only been disproved a regicide to be proved a traitor; that the evidence conclusively shows him to have been the great organiser and inspiring spirit of the combined insurrection; and that the distinction between king-killing and king-dethroning is not, after all, so very great. But such an objection has no place in the mouths of those annalists who wrote history to glorify "the cause for which Hampden died on the field and Sidney on the scaffold."

CHAPTER VIII.

1683.

THE SCOTS NEGOTIATION AND THE GENERAL INSURRECTION.

WHILE engaged in dealing with the assassination scheme, and directing the energies of its advocates into more honourable channels, Ferguson was also exerting all his powers to unite all sections of the Whig party and to press forward the general insurrection. In every branch of the movement his influence and activity is manifest. The leadership of the discontented in London had slightly changed in spring from what it had been in autumn, for Lord Grey was not one of the Cabal of Six, and Essex and Sidney brought into the councils of the disaffected a different element. The Duke of Monmouth began to fear that it would not be long before they disagreed; for he suspected that Essex and Sidney, whose models were the heroes of classical story, intended a commonwealth, and that Hampden would go with them, while no dependence could be placed upon Lord Howard. The Duke and Lord Russel were determined to leave them if that should prove to be the case, and in the meantime endeavoured to increase their own influence by bringing Lord Grey to join in the councils. In March he came to town, and learned that preparations for a rising were well advanced; that it would be made in London, in Cheshire, and the West, where Mr. Trenchard "had recovered his fright;" and that action was only deferred till arrangements should be made with

the Scotsmen who were coming to London. The time had come when Monmouth and Russel must make their stand, and they resolved to do so on two points of vital importance—the nature of the declaration to be made, and the extent of the power to be intrusted to the General. They determined that if Lord Essex and Colonel Sidney would not agree to a declaration “such as had been read at Mr. Shephard’s” in autumn, they would have nothing to do with them, for their object in taking up arms was to force reform, not to initiate revolution. When the Scots commissioners arrived, it was decided to hold a meeting of the Cabal, and Monmouth’s friends agreed that Lord Grey should raise the questions they wished determined. On the evening on which this was settled, the Duke took Lord Grey to Colonel Rumsey’s house, where Rumsey, Sir Thomas Armstrong, and Mr. Ferguson were. Grey could not imagine for some time what the object of this meeting was; but after the Duke had given a full account of the meetings and resolutions of the Cabal, and of the points he and Lord Russel intended to press, he “found the intention was that I should be instructed by Mr. Ferguson, and furnished with arguments to encounter my Lord of Essex and Colonel Sidney at the next meeting.” “Accordingly,” he says, “Mr. Ferguson did very learnedly teach me my lesson.” He proved an apt and intelligent pupil, for, if his own narrative is to be trusted at this stage, he thoroughly held his own with Sidney at the next meeting. After a long statement from Sidney of the steps that had been taken towards action, Grey suggested that he was very well satisfied with that, but could not yet see what they intended at last, and imagined Sidney had forgotten to mention the heads of their declaration, which he supposed was already drawn. Sidney replied that there was none drawn yet, and, when Grey insisted that the declaration should be settled before money was raised and life ventured,

muttered to himself for some time, and hinted that in Lord Essex' absence a declaration should not be talked upon. His own opinion, he added, was that the world should be told the King had broken the laws and his own oath, and the settlement of the kingdom be secured to a Parliament. Grey insisted that the declaration should contain a statement that they did not draw the sword for the destruction of the King or the Government, and was seconded by Monmouth, Russel, and Hampden. Sidney replied he had heard that when wise men drew their swords against their King they laid aside the thoughts of treating with him ; but would talk no more of that matter, since the others were all of one mind. They then discussed the question of General, when Sidney said there could be only one, and he the Duke of Monmouth. His view was that the Duke should head the rising in Scotland, to which Grey replied that he "would give him the same advice if he desired never more to see him in England." The others pointed out that Monmouth's going to Scotland would involve the collapse of the western insurrection ; and in the meantime the Whig chiefs parted, deferring the settlement of the declaration, and resolving to press on the Scottish rising.

In January, Aaron Smith had been despatched by Sidney, who furnished him with forty guineas for his expenses, on a mission to the Scottish malcontents. Ferguson, who at another time declared it "little short of a miracle that so many should know of their design and none reveal it," told West that "Smith behaved himself very indiscreetly in the said journey, and ran a risk of discovering the design." To Bourn he said that "Smith would have spoiled all, had not the person to whom he carried the letter gone to the Council, and showed them a letter he had about some business of Carolina, and asked leave to come to London about it, and so got off the suspicion." Sir John Cochrane, Baillie of

Jerviswoode, and Commissary Munro came as commissioners from the Scottish sympathisers to London, and, while ostensibly engaged in the Carolina project, "really intended a business of greater importance, which was, in their own language, to see what could be done for the delivery of the nation."

A code of cipher was devised by James Stewart for the use of the conspirators, correspondence was conducted under the guise of letters about trade and the metaphor of marriage, and the pass-word of the plotters was the word "Harmony," accompanied by the action of unbuttoning and buttoning the two top buttons of the vest. Carstares took an active part in the arrangements in London, and was often closeted with Ferguson. The Campbells of Cessnock were also in town, and the allegorical correspondence was managed by John Nisbet, who had been an usher in a school at Bethnal Green. It was said that 2000 or 3000 Scottish pedlars, who had been at Bothwell Bridge, were under the management of ten or twelve Scotsmen in London, and could be drawn into the town in the course of a few days, while assistance from the same source was counted on in arranging the surprise of Bristol.

But the consultations between the English Lords and the Scots were far from harmonious. The Scots thought the English were not ready to dare enough, and told them "they were only good for fireside plotting, whereas, for their part, they were resolved to rise though they had only their claws to fight with." When the Englishmen ventilated their Republican notions, the Scots told them that "their people would never hearken to that at first." Ferguson "always blamed Sidney for driving designs of his own," and told West that "Colonel Sidney and Major Wildman had used the Scots ill, and broken with them after making them attend two months; and the reason they broke was that the Scots

would not agree to declare for a Commonwealth and the extirpation of monarchy, but the said Ferguson had hopes of raising the money otherwise, but would not say how." The final agreement was that the Scots should have £10,000 to buy arms, and should rise then in Scotland, and be seconded by an insurrection in England. They had made the alternative offer that if the English would help them to £30,000 they would attempt a rising in Scotland alone. But the managers preferred to supply £10,000, and arrange a joint rising. Ferguson once told Shephard that Charlton would procure the £10,000, and raise it on a mortgage; and to West he said that an English Lord, whom he afterwards said was Lord Grey, had offered to do the same thing if the rest of the managers would secure him their proportions. Grey denies this, but admits that he promised to lay down two or three thousand pounds when Lord Russel stated his intention to subscribe that amount.

The Scots were not wholly of one mind among themselves. Carstares, who was in communication with Argyle, and had devised a plan to surprise Edinburgh Castle, was energetic in his efforts; Munro, the Cessnocks, and Lord Melville, "who thought everything hazardous and was positive in nothing," were against meddling with the English; Jerviswoode and Veitch were anxious to secure the English contribution. Ferguson, it is said, "managed on behalf of the Scots," and he impressed Carstares "as much concerned in the affair, and zealous for the promoting of it." The vicissitudes of the negotiation he occasionally imparted to West, "as that sometimes the Scots gentlemen were departing discontented, and then again, in three or four days, that they were like to agree, and that money should be provided for them." To Shephard Ferguson said that the proposal for £30,000 came from the Earl of Argyle, and by him a letter from Argyle was handed to Monmouth.

After many delays and disappointments a substantial arrangement seems to have been arrived at. The £10,000 was in sight; Ferguson told West that the arms lay ready in Holland, and the Earl of Argyle was to go over with them and head the Scots in person. The bills for the contribution were to be returned by Shephard to Amsterdam, and either Ferguson or Baillie was to go over with them, Ferguson saying to West that he was to go himself, and that the arms would be landed at Edinburgh Firth.

But important as was the Scottish branch of the rebellion, attention was by no means confined to it. Ferguson told Rumsey that "the rising must be in Scotland before harvest, otherwise the people could not be got together, and that four days after the Scots were up we should have the first intelligence, and that then we must rise in this town and in Taunton." To West he said that "he had good assurances of having Newcastle," and Holloway and Wade had a deep-laid scheme for the seizure of Bristol. To Bourn he spoke of a certain person of quality in the part of Ireland next Scotland that could raise 20,000 men, and had promised to do it, but would not be drawn into mentioning his name; and, according to Walcot, this personage was the only Irishman involved. To West Ferguson confided the plan of the combined movement, as being that one party should be up in the west at Bristol and Taunton, another in Yorkshire at York, another in Cheshire at Chester, in Devonshire at Exeter, in every one of which places persons of quality would appear, whom he was careful not to name; that the main push was designed at London, and was ordered thus, that several parties should at once attack the Tower, the Guards, and the Exchange, the Mews, Savoy, and Whitehall, and one at Westminster should fall upon the back of Whitehall; that a party of horse should be laid at Staine's Bridge, to waylay the King and Duke if they went towards Windsor,

and another party of horse to waylay them on their road to Portsmouth if they went thither; that the Mayor and the Sheriffs should be seized, but the design should not be communicated till it was ripe for action. He added that he hoped the Duke of Monmouth and Lord Russel might be prevailed with to appear in London. To Bourn, who often carried letters to Shephard for him, Ferguson spoke in a similar strain. He had to take him into his confidence, for "so many coming to him daily as did, made him jealous." The way in which he broached the subject is thus narrated by Bourn. "He took occasion one day to ask what I thought about the gentlemen that came so often to him, and then says: 'Admit there should be a design on foot for the benefit of the people of England, would you be against it?' To which I answered, 'If I can do it with a safe conscience, I could not well tell what I should be persuaded to.' 'As to that,' he says, 'I shall easily satisfy you,' and then went on to prove a mutual covenant between the King and the people; that his Majesty had broken it on his side, so the people were again at liberty. 'But to the matter,' says he, 'as indeed I will be plain with you; if you love yourself, you must come in, for there is a design on foot so laid, and so far gone, that it is impossible it should fail. Then I desired him, if he thought it convenient, to let me know some particulars; which he said he would, provided I would promise him secrecy, but especially I should say nothing to my father or wife—for he thought I would not speak to anybody else—upon which I said I would. And then he was plain, as he said, and told me as follows:—

"That there was not a county in England but had prepared for the business less or more, but especially in the north and west; and that they were sure of most places of strength throughout the kingdom, but especially Bristol and Newcastle; and that they were then considering how

to secure Portsmouth, but were afraid they should not, the garrison was strong.

“And that the Scots were to stir at the same time as we were; and that we were to lend them £10,000, to be remitted to Holland to buy arms for them, and that he was to go over with the bills of exchange. That he had found out a person could deposit the money on good security, which the Lords had promised should be given. That there was a Dutch merchant or two that he had got to provide the arms, for the English could not do it without suspicion.

“Then I asked him who the Lords were? He told me. There was the Duke of Monmouth, Lord Grey, Lord Russel, and Major Wildman and Colonel Sidney. I told him I wondered the Duke would be persuaded to take up arms against his father; for my part, I should be very unwilling to trust him. He answered me that he had the greatest assurance in the world of him; and that I need no more be afraid of the Duke than of him.

“He told me the Lord Argyle, who was to command the Scots, was of my opinion too; for he had a few days before sent a letter to him to be well satisfied in the point; and that he had sent him such an answer as he did not doubt would satisfy him.

“He told me that the Duke of York had 14,000 men in half-pay about the town; and, for his part, he thought we ought to defend ourselves, for we could not tell but our throats might be cut every night. I asked him how he could tell all this? He told me that they had a great deal of intelligence from the Tory party, for ‘there were some that were willing to play a sure game, and so keep in with both sides.’” It was Bourn that credited Ferguson with meditating making an example of some rich old citizens. To West he confided a more legitimate way of obtaining

funds. West asked what steps were taken to raise money, and he replied that "if the business were done and backed with success, there would be no want of money; there would be half a year's revenue of the chimney-money then due, besides what the Excise Office and the Custom House would afford, and that there was money and plate enough among the bankers and goldsmiths, which must be taken up upon public faith if there were occasion, and be punctually repaid again for the reputation of the cause."

Every phase of the design seems to have been thought out by Ferguson, and every current of political thought and state of social condition that could affect it was carefully watched by him. He told West that Mr. Cromwell, son of Richard Cromwell, who usually went by the name of Mr. Cranbourne, was so vain as to endeavour to make a party for himself or his father in the City; and to Holloway he mentioned that among the reasons that influenced the Duke of Monmouth, was his being "brought to a low condition, all his places being taken from him, and his tenants in Scotland being so severely dealt with on account of their religion, not being able to pay rent." He mentioned that Colonel Owen, the Doctor's brother, was engaged in managing the treaty with the Scots, along with Wildman, and that Mr. Meade, the Nonconformist minister, was zealous in the business of an insurrection, but was not for beginning it in London.

Ferguson also kept up his communication with the old assassination plotters and the circles in which they moved. Whether his was the influence that accomplished it or not, their attention was certainly turned, as the spring wore on, from a single desperate deed to a carefully planned and organised effort, which should initiate the campaign by placing London itself in the hands of the popular party. Meetings were held at taverns devoted to this purpose,

where, indeed, some of the old loose language was spoken, but where the real business was the dividing of the city into districts, the enrolling of so many men in each, and the devising of plans for the capture of the Tower and the principal centres of the city. Goodenough, who, as an Under-Sheriff, had been well acquainted with the citizens, was active in bringing in lists of men who could be depended on; and, to facilitate the work, a map of the town was hung up in West's chambers. The seafaring element at Wapping was communicated with; one or two sea-captains were concerned in the plot, and Ferguson was present at a dinner in the Fortune Tavern in Wapping on one occasion, when men of some position in the Whig party went, "as they said, to visit their honest Wapping friends," and healths were drunk to "The man that first draws his sword in defence of the Protestant religion," and to "The confusion of the two brothers, Slavery and Popery." It was suggested that a football match should be held, or a contest of some sort arranged, for a golden ball, which would collect large numbers of seamen on Blackheath, when the captains would take the opportunity of leading them against the Tower. Many schemes were devised for getting possession of the Tower by stratagem or by open attack, for capturing the arms at the Artillery Ground, and for seizing horses to mount those who would be ready to act as troopers. The all-important question of the Declaration also exercised the minds of the inferior coterie of conspirators. Rumsey and Wade, according to West, drew up "some few fundamentals which they thought reasonable," which Rumsey was to present to Lord Russel to be laid before the Duke of Monmouth and the managers, but "the same was rejected." Rumsey said that West and Wade had drawn up a project of government, which he gave to Ferguson, who told them he had heard that Colonel Sidney had drawn one, and he would

compare them and reduce them into an entire one; while Lord Grey was told by Lord Russel that the two sections of the Whig chiefs had agreed upon a declaration which would be to the mind of Monmouth and his friends, and that Lord Essex and Colonel Sidney had undertaken to draw it. By the end of May arrangements were far advanced; the Scots negotiations had reached a satisfactory stage, London had been divided into twenty sections, and there were good accounts of the numbers that could be furnished; assurances of support had been received from the country, agents were out trying the temper of the people for an immediate rising, and a hundred of Cromwell's old officers were in town ready to head the revolt.

But early in June, Gordon of Earlston, a Scotsman engaged with Argyle, was seized at Newcastle, on board a ship bound for the Continent, with compromising letters in his possession, and the vigilance of Government was aroused. Before tracing the collapse of the design, it is interesting to glance at the private life of Ferguson on the eve of the failure of his attempt, as it is illustrated by the few remaining letters that have been preserved. They bring his domestic relations down to the very hour of the crisis. His wife had returned to London from Essex, and the letter which comes next to those previously quoted is addressed "To Mr. Brindley, to be left with Mrs. Ferguson, at the Plough within Aldgate." It is as follows:—

"MY DEAREST,—I am glade thou art come safe to town, and long to see thee, but I dare not venture into London for reasons thou shalt know at meeting, so I can not invite to the lodging where I am at present. But I intend on Monday night to be at my lodging in *porteous* (?) Lane, where I think thou mayst come to me, and in the meantime let me hear from thee by Capt. Walcot, and send Franck to him

this morning, to prevent him sending that into the country to the which I trusted his son with. Seal the enclosed, and believe that I am, always thine,

ROB.

"May 26, '83."

"MY DEAREST,—I was not at those fine lodgings but from Tuesday till Saturday, and at as easy terms as I could have been at meaner. But I find some people must take occasion to talk, and will you, will — be so fond as to concern yourself in their twattle. Since no other means proves effectual to your recovering your strength, I think you had best go to Bath as soon as you can. And if it be possible I will send you some money between this and that, for I am promised some, but if it arrive not in time, pray use what you have. I am as careful as I can, and intend to retire into a private corner within these few days. Let not fear of trouble on thy part provoke God to bring it upon us. Carefulness may prejudice thee, and can contribute nothing to my safety. Surely my life is as dear to me as it is or can be to any, and am not yet so weary of it as to throw it away. I trust God reserves me for better times, and will in His own season bring us to a quiet enjoyment of one another. However, the will of the Lord be done.—I am, dearest,

WHOLLY THINE.

"May 29, '83."

"June 5, '83."

"MY DEAREST,—I would very fain see thee before thou goest to the Bath if it could be done with safety. But what method to propose for it, considering thy condition, and the malicious and vigilant endeavours of my enemies to discover and apprehend me, I can not tell. So that if it may not be, I entreat thy bearing it with patience, and not

to make it an occasion of further evil and trouble to thee. I have procured a friend to write to a person at the Bath to see for a lodging in some honest and convenient house for thee against thou arrivest, and thou shalt have also a letter to him when thou goest. There is likewise a Dr. of physick there who is a gentleman of honesty and worth, to whom I have taken care to get thee recommended by a letter which shall be put into thy hand to carry with thee. And these are the only ways that I can be assisting to thee in my present circumstances, unless I receive some money that is promised me, which I may send thee towards the defraying thy charges. What I wrote yesterday against thee taking Hannah with thee is still my judgment, to which I add, that besides thee having Franck to assist you, it will be needful to take a discreeter servant along with you than Mal. Pray let me know when you propose to go, that the letters may be sent you beforehand. The Lord goe with thee, and attend means with success. THINE."

" June 8, '83.

"MY DEAREST,—I wonder that I have not heard from you since Monday, tho' I sent you a letter on Tuesday to acquaint thee where I was to be found. Had I the same opportunity of conveyance to you as you have to me, few days should escape but that I should be desirous to learn something of your condition. But as I dare not trust a porter, so I have but few advantages of seeing friends by whom I can send. Our estate is bad enough through our separation; let us not make it worse by forbearing that communication which we may enjoy. Therefore, pray let me hear from you as soon as you can, and whether you hold your journey for the Bath on Monday; and seeing it will not be safe for me to write to you by your own name, I think thou hadst best goe there by the name of Brindley, or

at least that I should direct my letters to you by that superscription. There is a line gone to a friend to take care of a lodging for you, and you shall have another for him along with you. Send me word what resolves you are come to in reference to Hannah, whether you leave her behind or carry her with you. The money I reckoned upon is not yet come to my hand, but I hope to have some ready for you against your return. The presence of God be with you, and mayst thou be at once restored to strength and to, my dearest,

THINE."

"MY DEAREST,—*I am glade to hear from thee, though sorry that I can not see thee. But the malice of my enemies is so great, and their desire to have me so vehement, that I have not ventured out of doors these five days, and dare hardly admit any one to come at me. Yet, I am not without hope that by the time thou returnst I may find out some way of living together without hazard or observation. If I were certain of continuing in any fixed place, Hannah should be with me till thou comst back, but being forced to shift from place to place it is not possible to enjoy her. I contradict not her going to my brother's, yet should have been contented to have had her elsewhere if a fit place had offered. Thy perplexing thyself with this and other things doth but prejudice thee, and will obstruct the benefit you expect by the Bath, if you do not conquer your grief and . . . There are two letters sent already before you, and you shall have one, if not more, with you. I shall write more particularly towards the end of the week, and settle some way of correspondence. In the meantime I commend thee to God's protection and blessing, and remain,*

THINE.

"June 12, '83."

On the opposite page of this letter are some notes,

apparently by Mrs. Ferguson, or her daughter, about the disbursement of some money :—

For fringe, . . .	0 10 0	Recevd 13 shillins
gave me, . . .	0 3 0	for ribon, . . . 0 2 3
ribon, . . .	0 3 0	for stroberries, . . . 0 0 4
for a shade, . . .	0 1 0	
1 yard ell, . . .	0 2 0	
for comes, . . .	0 1 6	
for cherries . . .	0 0 2	

Finding this letter with these simple notes upon it where it is, one realises to some extent the feelings with which the first explorers of Pompeii came upon a simple domestic scene preserved in the lava which destroyed it. For it is the last, and it bears the date of the very day on which the conspirators were betrayed. Before "the end of the week" the confederates were dispersed, and, near as Midsummer now was, before it arrived Ferguson's books were forgotten, and he had to exercise all the ingenuity he possessed to "dispose of himself" with limbs unshattered and life un-sacrificed.

The Plotter's forecast of the immediate future, as to which he was so deeply in the secret, supplies the clue to his recurring anxiety for his wife's speedy journey to Bath; and in this crisis of his career, on the very threshold of revolution, it is interesting to find him contemplating placing one of his daughters beyond the perils of the *coup de main* that was to put the capital in the hands of his associates, by letting her join the household of one of his brothers in Scotland. Divergence of political sympathy, as well as distance, probably accounted for his reluctance in doing so, though both would tend to make the shelter more secure. But the development of events was to be even more rapid than he expected, and far other than he hoped. Whether his daughter reached her northern refuge is shrouded in

mystery, and I have been unable to discover where Hannah Ferguson was when Rachel Lady Russel faced a brutal bench and gaping crowd by the side of her noble husband.

We have seen that early in the month Gordon of Earlston had been seized at a northern port. A little later, on the 12th of June, Keeling, one of the City conspirators, "who," according to Burnet, "was sinking in his business, and began to think that of a witness would be the better trade," played the traitor, and revealed all. Confirmation, however, was wanted, and Keeling took his brother to a meeting on the 14th that he might be able to corroborate his testimony. The distrust of the conspirators was now awakened; it was whispered that "something was working which might do mischief to honest people." Suspicion fell upon Keeling, and if there had been any proof of treachery his life would have paid the forfeit. The suggestion was made that he should be decoyed into the country, and silenced for ever; but Rumbold, thinking that poverty might be his temptation, lent him a hundred pounds. It was too late to buy impunity in that way, for the mischief was done. Warrants, it was reported, were already out against some of the plotters, and on Sunday the 17th there could no longer be any doubt that the game was up. On Monday morning Colonel Rumsey came to Bourn's, and told Ferguson and Bourn what the state of affairs was. They went off together to the last meeting, held at Captain Walcot's lodgings in Captain Tracy's house, in Goodman's Fields. There were there present in all nine persons, three of whom afterwards gave evidence for the Crown, while another failed to save his neck by offering to do so. West, cruel and cowardly to the last, was for killing Keeling and Dr. Butler, who was supposed to have induced him to confess. Wade suggested that, if a thousand men could be got together, it were better to venture a push here or in the west, and die like men, than

be hanged like dogs ; but Rumsey replied that "it was vain to think of it, for the hearts of the people are down, and our great men are good for nothing." It was proposed to hire a boat for Holland, but that idea was given up when it appeared that they could not get clear of Gravesend before Tuesday night. West refused to flee to Holland, and the rest of the company, particularly, Rumsey, who had probably by this time determined on his own course, and perhaps feared to be forestalled, "looked wistfully in his face," as if they expected treachery. He told Rumsey that if taken he would not save his life unjustly, could say nothing against the Duke of Monmouth, and would do the Colonel no injustice, but rather give his hand to serve him, "which compliment," says West, "the Colonel returned, and so parted." The two scoundrels probably understood each other, and this passage must have taken place after the meeting separated, leaving every one to shift for himself. Walcot remarked that "God would yet deliver the nation, though He did not approve of the present instruments ;" but Ferguson, with the spirit of his countrymen, kept up his courage to the end. "Perceiving West much dejected, and Colonel Rumsey, Mr. Wade, Mr. Norton, Goodenough, and Nelthorp in some confusion, he laughed, and said to them, 'Gentlemen, you are strangers to this kind of exercise ; I have been used to fly : I will never leave off as long as I live, and I hope to see some of you at Dunbar before Michaelmas.'"

CHAPTER IX.

1683-1685.

FLIGHT AND EXILE.

AFTER the revelation of the Rye-House Plot, there was a lull of a day or two before the storm burst in full fury. Keeling's first information had been given on the 12th, his second on the 14th of June, and the last meeting of the conspirators, at which Ferguson's farewell was spoken, was held on the 18th. Warrants were immediately issued against Keeling's acquaintances, and, on the 28th, a royal proclamation was published, offering a reward of £100 for the apprehension of a number of the subordinate conspirators. In this Ferguson's name does not appear. But the next day Rumsey, whom Sir Thomas Armstrong had importuned to "be gone with the first, and prayed to keep close in the meantime, for he was mightily hunted after," surrendered himself for a pardon and reward. The result of his confession, and those of West and Shephard, was a second proclamation on the 28th of June, offering a reward of £500 for the apprehension of the Duke of Monmouth, Lord Grey, Sir Thomas Armstrong, and Robert Ferguson, all of whom had fled. Connected with this is one of the most curious incidents in Ferguson's career. He seems to have lurked for a day or two in London, and then took refuge in Scotland. On the 12th of July Luttrell noted in his diary: "Tis said that Ferguson is now at Whitehall, or known there where he is, notwithstanding his being in the pro-

clamation. Time must show the truth of these things." Thirteen years later, on an occasion (28th March 1696) when Ferguson was again in difficulty with the Government, Luttrell again mentions that "the messenger to whom Sir Leoline Jenkins, Secretary of State to the late King Charles, gave the warrant for apprehending the Duke of Monmouth, Lord Grey, Sir Thomas Armstrong, and Ferguson, against whom a proclamation was out offering £500 reward, last night made oath before Sir William Trumball that when Sir Leoline gave him the warrant, in the presence of King Charles, he bade him look sharp for the three first, but if he found Ferguson to take no notice." Of this Eachard naturally remarks that it is "a mystery not easy to be understood, but has caused variety of conjectures." Kennet quotes from "a modern writer" the same story, with the observation, "which is such a mystery that can never be unriddled, without believing him to be a State-intelligencer to betray the rest of the confederates. This relation I had from several gentlemen of known credit; but, being unwilling to publish it upon hearsay, I asked Mr. Legat himself about it, who is yet living, and a messenger in this reign, and he assured me of the truth of it, as it is above related, from his own mouth, and who will still justify it to any man whose curiosity leads him to make further enquiry about it." As told by Legat, Jenkins gave "a strict command not to take Ferguson, but to shun him wherever he met him, and, if he should happen to find him in company among the rest, he should suffer him to escape." Macaulay bases upon this, and another story of the same nature in connection with Monmouth's rebellion, the suggestion that Ferguson was a Court spy; but this is quite inconsistent not only with his own character as disclosed in his writings, but with the whole tone of the Tory writers towards him. The explanation may perhaps be found in his intimate and confidential

relations with Monmouth, in Monmouth's private correspondence with his father, or in the fact that Ferguson had, as seems to have been the case on a previous occasion, friends of his own at Court. If the Government had any inkling from Monmouth or otherwise, of his attitude towards the assassination plot, it is not unlikely that it might have been recognised by granting a few days' law before the chase was sounded in earnest. Certainly, when the evidence of the general insurrection accumulated in both England and Scotland, there was no half-heartedness in the search for "the one of all the conspirators most obnoxious to Government." It was his resemblance to Ferguson, as he records himself, that first exposed Carstares to danger, and, on 7th July, Lord Moray wrote to the Earl of Aberdeen that several captures had been made, "one of them being in a parson's habit, who some hope may prove to be Ferguson, a most pernicious villain, and deeply instrumental in this horrid conspiracy." Gordon of Earlston's disclosures under torture still further stimulated the desire to seize the keeper of the purse, but he had gone and left scarce a trace behind. Carstares mentions having seen him and Rumsey lurking "after the plot broke out, before the proclamation, having gone to Ferguson in the back of Bishopgate Street, at some new buildings, whither he was directed by Jerviswoode, who was desirous to know how things went." But Ferguson did not stay long in London. He had spoken of meeting the others at Dunbar, and he now bent his steps to the north.¹ The hue-and-cry was hot after him, and he gave a striking instance of his talent for saving himself and conquering the most adverse circumstances. "Worse tortures," says

¹ On the day the proclamation was issued, two correspondents wrote from Whitehall to Lord Preston, the Ambassador at Paris, "by command of Mr. Secretary," stating that "a proclamation is coming out for the apprehending of the Duke of Monmouth, my Lord Grey, Sir Thomas Armstrong, and Mr. Ferguson, with offer of £500 for each. They are said to be fled northward, in order to get into Scotland if they can."

Dalrymple, "were prepared for Ferguson, if he could have been found. It was known that he had fled to Edinburgh. The gates of the city were shut, and the strictest search made for him. But, under pretence of a visit to a prisoner, he took refuge in the jail destined for his reception, because he knew that there only nobody would expect to find him." This was the common report of Scotland, according to Dalrymple, and was confirmed by an order to search for him, found in the records of the Scots Privy Council, dated 4th July 1683. Diplomacy apparently was also set to work, for the King of France published in his dominions an edict offering a reward of 500 pistoles for the apprehension of each of the four mentioned in the English proclamation—Monmouth, Grey, Armstrong, and Ferguson. On the 4th of August another proclamation was issued in London for the seizure of the conspirators who had fled, in which Ferguson's personal appearance is carefully described. A false rumour, naming both the day and place of his escape, had previously reached the ear of Government, for Sir Leoline Jenkins was informed that he had escaped "along with Lord Grey, Lady Henrietta Berkeley, and some others, from an arm of the sea near Chichester, on June 29th, in the *Hare* pink, the master of which had £40, and his men £20, to convey them to Holland." But this story is disposed of by a report sent to Lord Preston by one of his correspondents (H. Ball) on 23d July, in which he says: "No news of the Lord Grey, Duke of Monmouth, etc., but the master of the vessel that carried the first over was taken on Friday, and confessed he did it; that my Lord, his mistress, her husband, the soldier that went away with him, and the turned-out officer of the customs went with him to Holland, where he left them, and since, they say, the lady is left at Brussels very ill, and the lord and the rest gone into Germany." More than two months after the alleged flight from Chichester, Ministers

were still hoping to catch Ferguson, and puzzling upon a false scent. On 8th September Sir Leoline Jenkins wrote to a correspondent out of London, about a letter that had been seized, and was believed to be Ferguson's. He suggested that it would be well to inquire for the person to whom it was addressed, "and to know what daughters he has, whether he hath not one married to a fanatic, and ye name of that fanatic." He proposed "waylaying the writer on his way to Woburn," mentioned that Sir A. Forrester judged the handwriting to be Ferguson's, and asked for "notice at ye soonest." But on the 11th of the month the Secretary of State had to explain that he was satisfied the writer was one Hardy, and to content himself with the statement that "all Ferguson's papers are in ye hands of Mr. Blathwayt."¹ The real route by which the Plotter had reached the Continent seems to be preserved in the undated letter of a spy to Lord Preston, who wrote: "I have intelligence that a ship lately arrived at Hamburg, after having landed three or four rebels of note, viz., Mr. Ferguson, Sir Thomas Armstrong, my Lord Melvin, and some others, who took their way toward Mecklenbourg, sailed away again immediately without making any stay." Before long we find him at Bremen, and he ultimately made his way in safety to Holland.

Such was the importance which the Government attached to Ferguson's activity: little less was attributed to him by public opinion. The belief that he was deeply implicated in the assassination produced a pamphlet called, "The Non-conformist's Vindication, or Mr. Ferguson's Fault no general crime;" and one of the satires of the victorious party was called, "The Brethren's Answer in London to Mr. Ferguson's Letter." It bears to be dated at London, "the last year of Whiggism, and the middle of the month of sorrow," and

¹ I find also in an old document, purporting to be a list of "Papers and Informations delivered by Mr. Blaythwayt to Sir Joseph Williamson on 25th April 1687," this entry: "93 Papers belonging to Ferguson" (Bundle U).

one passage runs thus: "We must needs, to the shame and confusion of your face, acknowledge that you were the mouth of the cause, and the greatest and chiefest instrument in carrying on the precious work of a further and more thorough Reformation. Indeed you were the main wheel that moved in the late mysterious engine, and by your indefatigable pains and industry in contriving and managing so great and glorious a design, that it was, in a manner, brought within sight of the promised land—but woe, and alas to you and us, we are neither of us permitted to enter into it, it was all blasted in the very minute." Another brochure was called, "Mr. Ferguson's Lamentation for the destruction of the Association and the Good Old Cause."

In several of the satirical songs which appeared at the time his name is preserved. Thus, in "Whig upon Whig, or a pleasant dismal song upon the old plotters newly found out," the lines occur:—

"I heard some people say,
 O hone! O hone!
 Monmouth is fled away.

 Armstrong and Grey, God wot,
 O hone! O hone!
 And Ferguson the Scot,
 O hone! O hone!
 Are all run, deil knows where,
 'Cause stay they dare not here,
 To fix the grand affair.
 O hone! O hone!"

"The Whigs Exposed" has a characteristic reference:—

"By their delicate Bill of Exclusion,
 So hotly pursued by the rabble,
 They hoped to have made such confusion,
 As never was seen at old Babel.
 Then Shaftesbury's brave City boys,
 And Monmouth's country relations,
 Were ready to second the noise,
 And send it throughout the three nations.

“No more of the fifth of November,
 That dangerous, desperate plot ;
 But ever with horror remember
 Old Tony, Armstrong, and Scot.
 For Tony will ne'er be forgotten,
 Nor Ferguson's popular rules,
 Nor Monmouth, nor Gray, when they're rotten,
 For wrong-headed politic fools.”

And in some verses of 1684, headed, “the Royal Admiral,” written on the Duke of York's appointment to the command of the navy, the verse is found :—

“Let Lobb and Ferguson preach up sedition,
 At conventicle, coffee-house, or at cabal ;
 Now Jeffreys is Justice, and York's in commisaion,
 Their scandal and plots shall pay for them all.”

There had indeed been a terrible scatter of the Rye-House Plotters, and the men of nobler names who superintended the general rising. Poor Walcot had written an abject letter, offering to discover all that he knew relating to England, Scotland, or Ireland, or “to follow the Lords and gentlemen that are fled into Holland,” and acquaint the Government with the measures they resolved to take next. “My intimacy,” he said, “with a Scotch minister, through whose hands much of the business went, I judge occasioned my knowing very much.” But the place of informer had been already occupied by Rumsey and West ; and as Walcot does not seem to have meditated telling more than he did know, and his disclosures, after their stories, scarcely fulfilled the expectations that his letter held out, he was left to his fate, and made the first example of the terrible vengeance that smote those within its reach. It is pleasant to turn from treachery and weakness to contemplate a very different action on the part of one equally unfortunate. Lord William Russel was no betrayer of those who had worked with him. Among the questions put to him when a prisoner in the Tower, on the subject of the unlucky

meeting at Shephard's, he was asked, "What did Mr. Ferguson say at any of these meetings, and by whom was he directed?" His Lordship answered that "he cannot tell what Mr. Ferguson did say there, nor doth he own that Mr. Ferguson was there."

The Duke of Monmouth fled to the Continent; Lord Grey made the messenger who arrested him drunk, and managed to escape by taking a boat at the very gates of the Tower; Lord Howard of Escrick, as Grey had expected, betrayed those into whose councils he had been admitted.

A severe retribution was exacted from the nobler conspirators on whom Government had laid its hands. Lord Russel and Baillie of Jarviswoode met their fate with dignity and resignation; Algernon Sidney "died as he lived, a stubborn assertor of the good old cause;" Sir Thomas Armstrong, who had escaped to Holland, but was treacherously seized at Leyden, brought to England, and sentenced to death upon his outlawry without a trial, and several lesser men, shared the doom, if not the fame, of their leaders. At his execution, Sir Thomas firmly denied being concerned in any plot to murder the King. Among the publications of the hour was one called, "A Letter to Ferguson, or any other the supposed Author of a late scandalous libel, entitled, 'An Elogie upon Sir Thomas Armstrong.'" On the 12th of July, at the sessions of Oyer and Terminer, at the Old Bailey, the Grand Jury had found true bills against Ferguson, his name alone being found both in the first indictment, which comprised the supposed assassination plotters, and in the third one along with his noble companions of the proclamation. Two years, however, elapsed, and the accession of James to the throne took place, before the process of forfeiture in Scotland against him and the other Scots conspirators who had taken refuge in flight, was carried through. On the 5th of May 1685, the

Lords Commissioners of Justiciary, "anent the petition be Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, His Majesty's Advocat, shewing that wher albeit he hath for punishing the late execrable plot, and some other conspiracies and treasons within this his ancient kingdom, given order for raising ane summons of Treason against Sir John Cochran Mr. Robert Fergusone, etc.: Yet His Majesty is desirous that they should (until they be found guilty) have all fair occasion and allowance of defending themselves, and least any of the saidis personis might be precludit from proponing of their defences on their being rebels, and at the horne," allowed "relaxation to be exped for the said Sir John Cochran and others above specified '*ad hunc effectum*,' that they may have '*personam standi in judicio*,' and propone their defences before the Parliament the fifteenth day of May instant." On the 22d of May an "Endytement of High Treason" was produced and publicly intimated in Parliament by his Majesty's Advocate against Robert Ferguson, "who was absent," and several others. An item in the charges against Sir John Cochran of Ochiltree, Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, Pringle of Torwoodlee, the heirs of Mr. Robert Martyn, Stewart of Coltness, Lord Melville, Montgomery of Lainshaw, Sir Hugh and George Campbell of Cessnock, was that they "did frequently meet with Mr. Robert Ferguson, sometime chaplain to the Earl of Shaftesberrie," and did correspond "in hieroglyphics and figures, and obscure and mystical terms." On the 4th of June the process against Ferguson himself came on. The evidence adduced consisted of the testimony of West and Bourn and the deposition of Carstares, and "a proclamation of outlawrie in England against the said Mr. Robert, with the letters of denunciation against him, and execution thereof; he being denounced to the horn, registrate and declared fugitive for the same crime before the Justice Court." West both condensed and embel-

lished his story given in England; Bourn's statement was an abstract of his previous testimony, with the addition that "Mr. Ferguson seldom discourst with him of anything but about the conspiracie and abusing the King, his present Majesty, and the Government." The decree of forfeiture charges him with having been accessory to the Bothwell Bridge rebellion, but no evidence was led in support of that, and the form, being the same as in other cases, was probably used with special reference to the others and applied to him by inadvertence. He has been confused with Robert Ferguson of Letterpin, who was at Bothwell Bridge. The charge generally was "found proven, and sentence of forfaulter was pronounced against him, after sound of trumpet in the usual manner, and thereafter his arms were reversed and torn by the heralds after sound of trumpet, in presence of His Majestie's Commissioner and the Parliament." He had already given fresh cause for an indictment of high treason.

The tragic death of the Earl of Essex in the Tower on the morning of Lord William Russel's trial had deeply impressed the public mind: the news of his confederate's suicide produced a strong impression on the minds of the jury, and prejudicially affected the fortunes of the accused; and, amid excitement and apprehension on all sides, the darkest construction was placed by many on what had occurred. The King and the Duke had visited the Tower that morning, and had hardly left when Essex put an end to his own life. Wild stories sprang up, and the temper of the Whigs was such that they were ready to believe anything of the Duke of York. Surmise connected the visit and the tragedy, and children playing outside the building told of a bloody knife thrown from the prisoner's window. The death was so opportune, the whole circumstances of the time were so alarming, that excited partisans may be excused for seeing in it the hand of the great object of their hostility. A busy-

body, named Braddon, made himself peculiarly active in collecting evidence in support of the rumour, and gave himself out as the prosecutor of the murderers of Lord Essex. In February 1684 he and another man called Speke were tried and convicted for spreading false reports, but for long years after it was a vexed question whether the Earl of Essex died by foul play or by his own hand. So much consistency had the popular delusion, that a formal Parliamentary inquiry was made into the circumstances after the Revolution. It is not therefore to be wondered at that the rumours of the moment, carried in fear and horror to the exiles in Holland, should be readily believed, greedily seized upon, and retailed to feed the popular commotion and increase the hatred with which the Government was regarded. The future course of public events was shaped not merely by the solid facts which we can disinter from the strange history of those times, but in a very great degree by the wild fables of Protestant flails, of warming-pans, of poison, and of assassination, which grew and flourished apace, in the absence of daily records, among an excited, an ignorant, and a prejudiced community. There was judicial murder enough perpetrated in the Courts to make another murder in the Tower no improbability; and if murder there had been, it was to some extent a justification of the offences with which the conspirators were charged. To some extent it discounted and discredited the evidence on which these charges were based, and the proceedings in respect of them. The murder of Essex became a commonplace of the Whig party, and in the bitterness of exile, in the flush of disappointment and disaster, it was not to be overlooked by an impetuous partisan and an incisive pamphleteer.

Ferguson took up the pen, and launched from his refuge another fulmination against the Government, under the title of "An Enquiry into and Detection of the barbarous Murder of the late Earl of Essex, or a vindication of that noble

person from the Guilt and Infamy of having destroyed himself." Apart from the public aspect of the tragedy, he asserts that there are "some special obligations upon me, by which I esteem myself more particularly bound than others are, to do all the right and justice I can to the memory of this massacred Lord. . . . He did me the kindness to own and befriend me at a juncture when I was in no small hazard from the malice of very powerful as well as considerable persons." The pamphlet contained a very express challenge. "I do therefore," declared the writer, "tell His Majesty, and publish to all the world, That if he will grant an indemnity and protection to three or four persons, we shall fully and evidently prove the Duke of York, the Earl of Sunderland, my Lord Feversham, etc., to have been the contrivers and authorisers of it, and shall name the ruffians in particular who were employed to perpetrate the hellish and execrable fact, with an account of the several sums of money which they had for the execution of it." This tract, which extended to over seventy pages, and included an elaborate examination of the circumstances of the death, is mentioned by Ferguson in his own list as "The Detection of the Murder of the Earl of Essex;" and Luttrell noted, on 19th December 1684, "There has been for some days past a scandalous libellous book entitled 'An Enquiry about the barbarous murder of the Earl of Essex,' and a single sheet written by Colonel Danvers, being an abstract of the former, thrown about the street, and in at several persons' doors, and there is a reward of £1000 published in the Gazette for any one that shall apprehend the said Colonel Danvers."

The murder of Essex was soon succeeded by another *canard* of faction, of an equally startling description. The sudden death of King Charles from a malady that puzzled the medical faculty of the day, at a time when he was credited with meditating a change of policy hostile to the interests of

the Duke of York, was the cause of much shaking of head among the politicians of the Opposition. Sir Patrick Hume says, "The grounds of base and treacherous means of bringing him to it were to me convincing." Poison was whispered, and again the finger of suspicion pointed at his brother James, whom his removal had seated on the throne. Many years afterwards, in 1725, Braddon published a criticism of Burnet's History, a defence of himself, and a reiteration of his theory of the death of Essex, at the end of which this remarkable passage occurs :—

"I shall now give a brief relation of what was supposed to be one of the principal occasions of hastening the poisoning of King Charles II., viz. :—

"Some short time before the death of that unhappy prince there was a pamphlet writ and printed in Holland, entitled, 'An Enquiry into and detection of the barbarous Murder of the late Earl of Essex,' and many hundreds of these were brought to England.

"In this pamphlet there were many arguments given to prove that murder. And the author did therein humbly beseech his then Majesty, that he would be graciously pleased to give his royal assurance of a pardon to him who should prove that murder. And then the Duke of York should be proved to have been the principal author and rewarder thereof.

"Several hundred of these books were one night, about twenty days before King Charles the Second's death, dispersed by some gentlemen, and for the most part laid at the doors of privy councillors, and of other noblemen, and of justices of the peace.

"One of these books was then conveyed to the King, who read the same, and then sent for Lord Allington, then Constable of the Tower, and charged his Lordship to read and

consider the same, and in a short time to return the book, and to give his Majesty his opinion thereof, and also what his Lordship thought as to the manner of the Earl of Essex's death.

“ My Lord Allington lent this book to Sir Thomas Rowe, but charged him to return it the then next day, because his Lordship did intend then to restore that book to the King.

“ Sir Thomas read and returned the book accordingly ; and shortly after waited again upon my Lord Allington, who did then inform Sir Thomas that he had been again with his Majesty and returned that book, and that thereupon the King asked my Lord whether he had read and considered the same ? and his Lordship answered that in humble obedience to His Majesty's commands he had read and considered the contents thereof. Whereupon the King then commanded my Lord to give his judgment as to the death of the Earl of Essex. But his Lordship did then humbly beseech His Majesty to excuse him from giving any judgment therein. Whereupon the King then said, ‘ I command you deal very plainly and sincerely with me in relation thereunto.’ ‘ Sir,’ replied my Lord, ‘ if your Majesty commands me to deal therein sincerely with your Majesty, I must then say that I am of opinion that unfortunate Lord had very foul play.’ ‘ Then, if I live,’ said the King, ‘ I will make a very strict enquiry into that matter. And I command you to come to me to-morrow.’

“ As soon as the Lord Allington withdrew, the Duke of York came in whilst the King had the book in his hand. And (as the King the next day informed my Lord) the Duke asked His Majesty who had brought him that villainous lying pamphlet ? But the King then said that he did not believe it to be a lying pamphlet, and that His Majesty was resolved to make a strict enquiry into the Earl of Essex's death. And His Highness should go abroad before that

inquisition was made. The Duke thereupon declared that he 'had already travelled too much.'

"The substance of what is above mentioned relating to what past between King Charles II. and the Lord Allington, I had from Sir Thomas Rowe soon after the Revolution. And some few days after that discourse between the King and the Duke, the King and the Lord Allington were seized with such an illness as was generally thought to be the effect of poison.

"And the Lord Allington died about three days before the King, and His Majesty died the 6th day of February 1684-5. And so by that King's being forced to travel too soon into the other world, King James delayed his own travels in this, until the consciousness of his own guilt and the just desertion of his own troops forced him to become a fugitive and a pensioner to that great monarch whose arbitrary government he liked much better than to be circumscribed by those good laws which hindered him from ruining both our Church and State."

If this story reached Ferguson at the time, it has a bearing on a statement in Monmouth's declaration, repeated by the Scottish author of Argyle's, as to the King's death; and his becoming subsequently convinced of the falsity of the rumours, which the exiles then implicitly believed, accounts to some extent for the tenor of his references to King James in later life.

CHAPTER X.

1683-1685.

EXILE AND PREPARATION.

IN the Low Countries Ferguson found himself among a whole colony of exiles, Englishmen, and compatriots of his own, who congregated around the Earl of Argyle. It has been said that he then entered the Dutch service to learn the art of war, which he soon afterwards attempted to put in practice; but this assertion is probably due to the error of confusing him with his brother James, who at that time held a lieutenant's commission in one of the Scots regiments in the service of the States. The Duke of Monmouth's conduct had been marked by strange vacillation in the months that followed the Rye Plot. He had written a very submissive letter from abroad to the King, expressing the utmost horror of being associated with the idea of the assassination, offering to "say that to you, Sir, that will ever, I hope, settle you quiet in your kingdom, and the Duke after you," and exhibiting the greatest penitence for his error, and affection for the King. Charles could hardly, it is said, dissemble his satisfaction on receiving this letter, but simply replied that if the Duke wished to render himself capable of mercy, he must surrender himself to the Secretary, and resolve to tell all he knew. Monmouth wrote again, praying for pardon "not otherwise than by the intercession of the Duke," and stating his resolve to put himself entirely into his Majesty's hands. In the November

after the plot was discovered, he came over, and threw himself at the King's feet. He denied that he had any knowledge or thought of the assassinating part of the conspiracy, but acknowledged his share in the rest, revealing many passages before unknown, and incriminating Dr. Owen, Mr. Mead, Mr. Griffith, and all the considerable Nonconformist ministers as cognisant of it. Dr. Owen was then beyond the reach of treachery or calumny. It was on this occasion apparently that Monmouth, according to Sprat, spoke of Ferguson as a "bloody villain," and said, "that in all their debates he was always for cutting of throats." The privilege was granted that he should not be brought as a witness against any man, but immediately the King was enraged by his consorting with his former friends, and a report that went about that he had made no confession, but asserted that some who had been executed were innocent. Charles insisted that Monmouth should write a letter acknowledging his guilt, and denying the statements attributed to him. The Duke complied. But, back among his friends again, he seems to have felt that this was aiding to hang others; the other feeling reasserted itself, and he returned and begged the King to restore the letter, lest it should give opportunity to his enemies to blast his reputation. The King told him he would never keep it against his will, and, on Monmouth insisting after a night's reflection, returned the letter, and banished the Duke from his presence and the Court.¹ Monmouth's reception was said to have prejudicially influenced the fate

¹ A most interesting account of the passages between Monmouth and the King is given in a letter printed by the Historical Manuscripts Commission. It is dated Whitehall, 10th December 1683, and is from Sir Leoline Jenkins to Lord Preston. "In my last," says the Secretary, "I promised your Lordships some account of our great domestic incident, then depending: you will easily call to mind what account the Gazette of this day fortnight gave of the Duke of Monmouth's being received by His Majesty into grace and favour again, which was no sooner done but the party made it their business to expose what was said in that Gazette as false, and the Duke of Monmouth himself treated it as injurious to him. Though what is in the Gazette was first read to, and approved

of Algernon Sidney, whose doom had been deferred for six months after Lord Russel perished; he again left England, and betook himself to Holland. On a subsequent occasion he made a secret visit to England shortly before the death of Charles II., and it was believed that if that monarch had lived a little longer, a change in his policy would have taken place, depressing the preponderating influence of his brother, and restoring Monmouth to some degree of favour.

But meanwhile the exiles in Holland were busy and impatient. The accounts that reached them from Britain were not calculated to allay the feelings of indignation and resentment with which they viewed the proceedings of the Government, and their own condition and companionship did not tend to increase a spirit of contentment with their position. Ferguson himself had again all but shared the fate of many of his friends. On the 12th of June 1684, just a year after the revelation of the plot, a correspondent writing to Sir Ralph Verney informed him that, "Sir Thomas Armstrong, taken in Holland, expected here last night: Lord Grey and Ferguson escaped narrowly." Lord Grey himself mentions how nearly the audacious captors of the fugitive in his refuge had been to making a prize of Ferguson

of, by His Majesty and the Lords, the decrying of the Gazette, and indeed, of the conspiracy itself, was so openly done, that the King thought it necessary that the Duke of Monmouth should give some public testimony against it by letter to His Majesty, declaring that he did not go about to discredit the evidence against those that have died for the conspiracy, but should so far own his guilt in the conspiracy as to say expressly he was sorry for his having had any share in it, *not that he was charged with any part of the conspiracy which concerned His Majesty's life, but in the other part of it, that is, the insurrection.* His Majesty endeavoured to win the Duke of Monmouth to own thus much to the world, since he had owned much more in private to him and the Duke. But His Majesty not prevailing upon him, he sent Mr. Vice-Chamberlain to him on Friday morning to forbid him his presence, and to command him out of the Court. The single thing that I would observe to your Lordship is this, that we owe this resolution to no man's counsels, but to His Majesty's own firmness, and tho' his tenderness was very great, yet he suffered it not to prevail against what he owes to his lawful successors and his dutiful subjects."—H. M. Com. 7th Rep., App., p. 368.

also. "There was," says Fountainhall, in his "Historical Observes," "in the same house the tyme Sir Thomas was tane, the Lord Grey, Ferguson the minister, and Rumbold the maltster, but they escaped for this bout." One or two entries in the correspondence of the time enable us to trace the initiative which led to the skilful swoop being made. On 13th March Sir R. Bulstrode wrote from Brussels to Lord Preston at Paris: "I am told by Mr. Skelton that Sir Wm. Waller plays the devill at Bremen, which is like to be the nest of all the persons accused of the last conspiracy; that my Lord Melvin and many more of that stamp are there, as also Armstrong and Ferguson, and that they expect the Duke of Monmouth there very speedily: they speak most scandalously of the King and Duke, and style Waller a second Cromwell by way of commendation; and they threaten to pull Mr. Skelton in pieces if ever they light upon him, and are upon publishing an infamous print against him." The diplomatist in Paris passed on this information to the envoy at The Hague; for, on the 27th of the same month, Lord Preston wrote to Mr. (afterwards Sir Bevil) Skelton: "I hear Sir Wm. Waller governeth highly at Bremen, and that he hath given retreat to Sir Thomas Armstrong and Fergueson, and the rest of that loyal society. I should be glad, Sir, to hear some particulars of this from you. I am also told that you are marked out by them for a sacrifice, when opportunity serveth. I know this will make you more active and vigorous in pursuing such bloody villains, whom the justice of God will pursue and overtake in time." Lord Preston's judicious application of the spur was effectual; Mr. Skelton showed unwonted energy, and if Sir Thomas Armstrong was not left to the justice of God, he fully experienced the injustice of man.

The same spy who had previously informed Lord Preston of the arrival near Hamburg, continued to send him infor-

mation, of such a nature as he could pick up, and to watch the movements of the exiles. In an undated letter referable to this period he wrote: "I saw a letter two days ago from that Mr. Smith, the chirurgion, that was here a while ago, and was frighted away as I have already informed. He writes to one Mr. Thompson, his banker and correspondent here, wherein I find that himself and two others have a strict correspondence with Monmouth, Ferguson, Argyle, and other malcontents. . . . I hear from another, lately come out of Flanders, that Ferguson is certainly *incognito* with the Duke of Monmouth, and intends to follow his motions, and doth direct his councils; that that Duke doth flatter himself still with the hopes of royalty, and of the decease of the King and Duke: there are certainly some dangerous practices now on foot in Scotland and in England: all those of our royal family must have special care of their persons—new and wittier heads are sought for to lead anew the forsaken good old cause, and new pretences invented of which you will certainly hear further in short time, especially if the truce come to be absolutely broken, as they say there is some probabilities; for then, to keep England from meddling abroad, these rogues shall be powerfully assisted; but if an accommodation proceed, then all things will be more moderate."

The spy was not far wrong in the main, for the exiles were plotting hard. The Earl of Argyle was eager for action; Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, and others who consorted with him, were ready to move; and among the English fugitives were many prepared to stake much on a last desperate cast. The enterprise then hatched failed of success, and has been harshly judged. Yet every argument that justified the subsequent invasion of William is applicable to the attempt of Monmouth and Argyle, regarded from a Whig point of view. The differentiating circumstance is

the alienation of large masses of the Tory party from the policy of James II., and they who had seen in the accession of James the culmination of all the calamities against which they had been contending were naturally unwilling to let his position consolidate, and his policy prevail. The scheme of an insurrection had been dashed by the discovery of the Rye Plot; it could only be resumed in the form of an invasion, and it was not long before those concerned in it began to collect the threads and weave, as best they could, the torn web together again. For the success of any such attempt, one condition was essential. There must be simultaneous and concerted action in England and Scotland to divide the royal forces, and animate the insurgents with the hope of support from their friends. If Argyle embarked, there must be an attempt on English soil, to give him a chance of triumph; if England was to be assailed, it would be folly to miss the opportunity that the Scottish rising afforded. Simultaneous effort was a *sine qua non*, and to secure it much else must be sacrificed. Defeat might come otherwise, but disaster was certain unless this was obtained; and it lay in the power of one party of the exiles to force the hands of the others, while the chief of that party was tormented by colleagues whose activity in council was such that he must have earnestly longed for the moment when he could turn them to action in the field.

Among the English exiles in Holland were Lord Grey. Rumbold, Ayloff, Wade, Goodenough, and others concerned in the previous conspiracy. Lord Grey composed, when a prisoner after Sedgemoor, a detailed narrative of his own actions, purporting to make a full confession of what he knew, and offering his knowledge to buy his life. It is written in a strain unworthy of a man of high honour, is abject in its deprecatory allusions to the principles he previously held, and continually reflects disadvantageously on

his associates. So far as it screens himself it is contradicted by the evidence of others, who represent him as one of those most zealous for the attempt, and, especially at this period, the most critical for himself, is written so as to colour everything in favour of the writer, and to the prejudice of those who were not at hand to defend themselves. He disparages Ferguson, and Ferguson, we shall see, in turn discredits him. Grey had, undoubtedly, considerable skill in colouring his narrative, and the course of the secret communings in Holland gave great scope for the art. He tells that soon after the flight from England, before Sir Thomas Armstrong was seized in the spring of 1684, " Mr. Ferguson comes to Cleve, and, discoursing with me, began with a long preamble of our sad circumstances, and with the heavy oppressions which he said the three nations groaned under; and at the end of his harangue told me that some on that side the water had held a correspondence with Scotland in order to a rising (notwithstanding the difficulties we at present laboured under), and that the people of that kingdom were so generally disposed to it, that nothing could prevent their being in a flame in a short time, but that my lord Argyll himself and others were afraid it would prove a second Bothwell Bridge business, unless men of more prudent understandings and greater quality did engage in this than did in that. And therefore his business with me was to persuade me to send for the Duke of Monmouth, and to procure a meeting and good understanding between him and my lord Argyll. When he had ended his discourse (which was very tedious) I told him that from my leaving England to that time I had held no correspondence with the Duke of Monmouth; that I did believe I knew how to send to him, but would not about such an affair as that was; and that if my lord Argyll had anything more to say to me, I thought myself obliged to hear him. Mr. Ferguson left me upon this answer, but

told me, when he had spoke with my lord Argyll I should hear from him, for he was sure my lord would desire to speak with me; but I never heard afterwards that he did, nor did I believe anything of Mr. Ferguson's story, but looked upon it as an imaginary rebellion of his own brain: but had I given credit to it I would not at this time have drawn my sword against the King." Lord Grey was afterwards seized, along with Sir Thomas Armstrong, but made his escape and returned to Cleve, where the Earl of Argyll and some English outlaws soon arrived. Goodenough, who was very often with the Earl and his friends, on one occasion, when walking with Lord Grey, "began a discourse much to the same purpose as Mr. Ferguson's," but did not propose sending for the Duke of Monmouth, and only mentioned him as a person who might be very serviceable in such an undertaking. They had some talk about what the exiles described as Monmouth's ingratitude, and Goodenough again pressed Lord Grey whether he would join, should the gentlemen of the west take up arms, receiving only an evasive answer. In the end of December, or the beginning of January 1685, Grey had an interview with Monmouth at The Hague. The Duke then spoke of entering the Emperor's service, of going to Sweden, and of betaking himself to the Court of Zell. Suddenly the whole aspect of events was changed, and action precipitated, by the unexpected news of King Charles's death on the 6th of February 1685. "The sad news of his death by L. Oh! cruel Fate!" was Monmouth's entry in his diary. He gave himself up to an agony of grief, but his thoughts soon turned into another channel. He had departed to Brussels, while Lord Grey went to Amsterdam, where an interview took place, of which he gives the following account:—

"I lay privately, no person but Mr. Dare knowing my lodgings, who, coming often to me, acquainted me that Mr.

Ferguson knew of my being in town, was very inquisitive after my lodgings, and had a great desire to speak with me; which I did not intend he should: but he had that opportunity afterwards at a Dutch merchant's, one Monsieur Oylbrook, by whom I was invited to supper, whither Mr. Ferguson came, being also acquainted with him. Mr. Ferguson desiring to speak with me alone, we retired into another room, where, after a long discourse of the Duke of Monmouth's conduct during the time of his being beyond sea; of the many reports which had been spread by himself and others to the Duke of Monmouth's prejudice; of his ungrateful deportment to my lord Argyll, myself, and many more; of the apprehensions most had that he constantly held a correspondence with his father: he said all these suspicions were now to be laid aside, for no man could apprehend his corresponding with your Majesty, and all injuries on both sides to be remembered no more; and that a perfect unity among us was absolutely necessary to preserve the liberties of three kingdoms, and the Protestant religion in them, and by consequence in all Europe. And to me he recommended the procuring a meeting between the Duke of Monmouth and the lord Argyll, that there might be an amicable end of all differences, and we might jointly apply ourselves to the redemption of our several countries.

“At the end of this learned harangue, I told Mr. Ferguson he could not direct his discourse to a more improper person than myself, for that I had taken my leave of the Duke of Monmouth, had quitted all thoughts of concerning myself any more with public affairs, and was going a long journey, to settle where I hoped to live at ease: that I should be glad to do good offices between the Duke of Monmouth and those he had named, but my departure would be too sudden to accomplish that work. He asked me where the Duke of

Monmouth was, and what resolution he had taken upon the news of the King's death. I told him he was gone to Brussels, and that as for his intentions I knew them not, and it was impossible anybody should, he changed them so often; upon which Mr. Ferguson, in some heat, said that if the Duke of Monmouth did not act speedily for the redemption of his country, there were those that would without him. Our discourse ended for that time; but after supper, as I was returning home, Mr. Ferguson overtook me in the street, and in a great passion railed at the Duke of Monmouth, condemning him for great numbness of spirit and slothfulness, and said, though he had been idle, there were others had been active enough. I was to have answered him, but he was so full of what he had to say, and so impatient to unload himself, that he would not hear a reply, but went on to this purpose: that my lord Argyll, and several Scotch gentlemen on that side the water, had for some time held a correspondence with many noblemen and gentlemen in Scotland; that they had resolved on a rising in that kingdom, and that in order to it my lord Argyll had bought a great quantity of arms and all sorts of ammunition for war, and had got a great many Scotch officers, which he had drawn from the service of the Prince of Orange, and several German princes; that he wanted for no money, and that all things were in that readiness for his design, that a discovery now could not prevent the execution. And therefore once more he pressed me to send for the Duke of Monmouth, that there might be a meeting between him and my lord Argyll.

“By this time Mr. Ferguson was out of breath, and I had his leave to speak, and told him that I would not send a letter to Brussels about such an affair as he had discussed of, and to desire the Duke of Monmouth to come to Amsterdam, without acquainting him with the reasons why I

thought it improper: that I had no acquaintance to send whom I could intrust with such a secret, and therefore I thought he had best go to Brussels, and wait on the Duke of Monmouth himself. I knew that proposal would stop his mouth, and that he durst not at that time trust God Almighty with his person out of Amsterdam"—not surprising, when we recollect the kidnapping of Sir Thomas Armstrong—"and it proved so, for he refused to go, and talked no more to me upon that subject; but a few days after told me he was very sorry that the other night he had troubled me with so long a history, in which there was nothing of truth; and immediately fell into a great passion of railing against several of his countrymen, saying they had abused him in assuring him of the truth of all he had acquainted me with; which upon examination he found to be all false, and, therefore, he resolved to remove a great way from thence, where he was offered a very good living and there intended to settle. I seemed to believe all he said, and appeared as much deceived as I thought he would have me; but did then think more than I did before that there was some rising intended in Scotland, and that the reason of Mr. Ferguson's last discourse was the great coldness and backwardness he observed in me to engage the Duke of Monmouth or myself in it.

"I was confirmed in that opinion a few days after by Mr. Dare, who told me the Scotch had sent to the Duke of Monmouth, and they received a very obliging answer from him, and that the Duke of Monmouth and my lord Argyll would soon have a meeting, and that 'Mr. Ferguson had told him so.'" Such is Grey's account of an incident not creditable to Ferguson's reputation; for it exhibits him as practising duplicity, which perhaps was very necessary to Lord Grey, but could not be used without leaving a dark stain on his own fame. It is startling, however, to find Lord Grey,

immediately after recounting this interview, going on to describe his own impoverished condition, and dwelling on the reasons which prepared him for "the wicked undertaking" he engaged in soon afterwards. Very soon indeed he is found engaged heart and soul, and quoting the example of Henry VII. of England. But the rest of his charge against Ferguson must be given. "Captain Mathews," he says, "came some short time after these my misfortunes one morning to my chamber, and told me he came from the Duke of Monmouth, to provide a lodging for him in that city, and that he would be there in two or three days; that since his own arrival at Amsterdam, which was that morning, he had been with Mr. Ferguson, who had entertained him with a long discourse; and so repeated to me the whole history of my lord Argyll's preparations for the rising in Scotland, exactly as Mr. Ferguson had told me it before; but said Mr. Ferguson had charged him not to acquaint me with it, and assured him I knew nothing of it from him. I immediately acquainted Captain Mathews with all the discourses that had 'passed between Mr. Ferguson and me, which satisfied us both as to his honesty and sincerity, but his politicks we could not comprehend." Unfortunately Ferguson has left no account of these interviews, but from his narrative of subsequent events it is clear that he learned then, if not sooner, to distrust Lord Grey.

The Duke of Monmouth had already been in communication with Sir Patrick Hume and other Scotsmen, who, in his quaint words, were "fully and distinctly satisfied and cleared of the obligation and duty lying upon us as Christians and Scots natives to endeavour the rescue, defence, and relief of our religion, rights, and liberties, and the many distressed sufferers on their behalf." They had met at Rotterdam, and Sir Patrick Hume declares the Scots found Monmouth to be of their opinion, and "as much as any

persuaded" that something must be timeously done. The Earl of Argyle announced to Hume and his friends his intention of acting without delay, and the forward state of his preparations, but exhibited considerable jealousy of Monmouth. Sir Patrick Hume resolved to sound Monmouth as to his personal intentions. He asked him in what character he intended to act, and the reply was "as a Protestant and Englishman, for the Protestant religion and liberties of the nations." Hume "urged further, if he considered himself as lawful son of King Charles last deceased? He said he did." Hume then asked if he was able to prove the marriage of his mother, and Monmouth replied he had lately been able to do so, and could yet if some persons had not recently died. He intended not to claim the crown, "unless it were advised to be done by those who should concern themselves and join for the delivery of the nations, and that, whether so or not, he would lay no claim or use no title but by advice and to the advantage of the common cause;" that if victory attended him he would lay it down, in the hands of the representatives of the people, for them to settle the future form of government, and that he would accept what station they bestowed. Hume told him that many of their English friends of Republican notions were jealous of his aspiring to the royal dignity; but that if he would give assurances on the lines he had mentioned, he would "quickly be most acceptable to all, and in all probability be the great instrument of the nations' deliverance;" "whereupon, he took deep asseverations in the presence of God, that he intended and would do as he had spoken, and repeated what is before rehearsed, and said he would give the like assurance to the English, as he did very solemnly." Monmouth now threw himself into the project with all energy. He once offered to go to Scotland, but that roused the pride of Argyle, and, after many conferences,

and not a little jealousy and misgiving on both sides, it was arranged that Argyle should delay until a simultaneous rising could be concerted in England. The Earl had already begun to experience the opinionative interference, in everything that required the guidance of a single mind, of Polwarth and his friends, whose dislike to arbitrary power seemed to extend to supremacy and individual initiative of every kind, and thus early the seeds were sown of the disaster that followed. The Scots' declaration, written by James Stewart, and revised and amended to their hearts' content by the debating club whose proceedings Sir Patrick Hume records with much satisfaction, was compared at Amsterdam with the English one prepared by Ferguson, and, "after arguing and amendments," both were "settled and adjusted to one and the same purpose in the declarative part, the narratives being fitted to the different circumstances of the two nations."

Meanwhile the Duke had been carrying on a correspondence with England. The chief source of his intelligence was Major Wildman, who had been released in safety, along with Lord Brandon Gerard, Charlton, Trenchard, and Mr. Booth, six months after the discovery of the Rye Plot. He was again engaged in plot and intrigue, and, to use Macaulay's expression, "grazing the edge of treason" with impunity, in a manner equal, if not superior, to that of Ferguson himself. He had sent a Mr. Smith, whose real name was Craggs, and Wade and Tyley brought the news of his arrival to Monmouth and Lord Grey. "Mr. Ferguson," says Grey, "came that night to us, and gave an account of Mr. Smith's business in general in England, and desired the Duke of Monmouth's leave to bring him the next morning that his Grace might receive a more particular relation." Next day Smith came. He said he was sent by Major Wildman "to acquaint Mr. Ferguson and other outlaws in Amsterdam that it was the

desire of all their friends that there should be a perfect reconciliation between the Duke of Monmouth, Lord Argyll, and them ;” that there might be “a conjunction of counsels for the redemption of three kingdoms.” He named leading Whigs, including Lord Devonshire, as favourable to the attempt, and spoke in the most encouraging language of the prospects of an invasion. Grey pressed him a little in regard to Lord Devonshire, and he replied that that nobleman had received too many marks of his fidelity to distrust it ; that “Mr. Ferguson and others in Holland knew well that he had been employed by some in London to disperse those books which gave an account of my Lord Essex’s murder ;” that new evidence of it had transpired, and that Lord Devonshire had taken the matter up, arranged to bring it before Parliament, and so placed himself in danger of assassination, and therefore his co-operation was founded on very real grounds.¹

Monmouth and Grey then considered by themselves as to the course to be pursued. Grey advised that Wade and Tyley could give reliable accounts of the western counties, that Ferguson and Goodenough could do the like for London. “The Duke of Monmouth,” he says, “had not the best opinion of Mr. Ferguson’s secrecy, and, tho’ he did not distrust his fidelity to him, yet he thought he had as many confidants as acquaintances, and therefore resolved to con-

¹ When examined by Government, after the rising, this Mr. Craggs said that “he was brought in by Disney to go to Holland to know what the Duke of Monmouth was doing. He went to Dare at Amsterdam, and saw Ferguson, to whom he told his message, and carried his answer to Disney.” Disney was one of the first victims, for he was the printer of the declaration. The officers of justice, aided by some files of musketeers, swooped down on his house, and found the formes of the traitorous declaration in the printing-room, 750 printed on one side, and about five of them perfect. He was executed on Kennington Common a week before the battle of Sedgemoor, and met his fate with calmness and pious resignation. Wade confirmed Lord Grey’s statement as to Cragg’s credentials being vouched by his activity in the Essex affair, and said he was sent back by Ferguson with assurance that a correspondence should be settled as desired, and with a request for an assistance of some thousands of pounds.

veal from him his place of sending, the names of some he intended to send, and the time of his going." The resolution was taken to make the west the seat of war, to despatch a messenger to the friends there and in Cheshire, and to arrange a rising in support in Cheshire and London. Smith was sent to London, "of whom Mr. Wade, Mr. Tiley, and Mr. Ferguson gave as they thought a very good character," on account of his activity in dispersing the Essex pamphlet, and his fidelity in bringing over money, and in the service of the faction in London. To Wildman Monmouth sent a special token, consisting of a slip of paper with a jagged edge, torn from a piece in Wildman's possession, which it had been arranged was to be the signal of business of importance. The messengers bore carefully framed messages to all whose assistance was expected.

Monmouth and his friends were not idle in their absence. Ferguson attempted to set in motion action in their support of a very great and far-reaching character. The policy of the Prince of Orange was dark, but the sympathies of the authorities of Amsterdam with the design were open and notorious. It would seem that, a little later, the successful starting of the expedition was owing in no small degree to Ferguson's friendship with the Schout or High Bailiff of Amsterdam. He now endeavoured to use his influence there to provide against eventualities of a very important nature. "We did not," says Grey, "disapprove of a proposition made by Mr. Ferguson to this purpose, that there being four of the chiefest lords (as they call them) of Amsterdam of his acquaintance, who knew in general of the Scotch affair (and had safely inquired of him if nothing could be done in England of that kind), they should be applied to as from the Duke of Monmouth, and only in general acquainted with our design in England, and asked that if the French King should assist against us, what we might expect from

their State. Mr. Ferguson named the four lords, but I remember two only—M. Haddaw, and M. Boreale, the Scout of Amsterdam." Dare, who knew Boreale well, was instructed to approach him, and Ferguson undertook the three others, the exiles expecting, at any rate, to obtain intelligence of what was passing at The Hague. Ferguson, in a few days, brought an answer from Haddaw and the other two, that "they could not take upon them to say what the States would do in such a case as we had stated to them, nor was it proper for them to inquire of any, but that we might well imagine, it being the interest of their State to support the Protestant interest in Europe, they would not willingly see it destroyed in England, and that for their own particulars, they were infinitely obliged to us for the confidence we had in them, and wished well to us and our design." Boreale replied to the same effect, but added that he would constantly report the demands of the British envoy, and the resolutions of the States, and would execute no orders to the prejudice of the exiles without giving them timely notice. "His intelligence," says Grey, "afterwards was of that use to us that without it neither my Lord Argyll nor the Duke of Monmouth could have sailed from Amsterdam with their provisions for war, such a prodigious noise did they make through all Holland."

Argyle by this time was impatient. His friends in Scotland were pressing him to make haste; he was exposed to expense in "maintaining the Scotch officers he had got, and many other poor Scotsmen;" and when good accounts came from England, he resolved to make ready to sail. So much excitement did his preparations cause, his officers being "as much stared at and talked of in Amsterdam as if they were Bantummites," that M. Boreale sent word from The Hague that it would be impossible for him to delay stopping the expedition beyond two or three days. Obtain-

ing an assurance from Monmouth that he would embark six days afterwards, the Scots went on board, and after waiting for a day or two in the Zuyder Zee, to ship the remainder of their ammunition, the little armament under Argyle's command set sail from the Vlie on the 2d of May. With him went Rumbold and Ayloff, two Englishmen of Rye-House fame; Ferguson and Fletcher of Salton remained as two Scotsmen who were to share the fortunes of Monmouth.

Good accounts continued to come from England of the prospects there. It was said that the corruption and arts for packing the Parliament used in the late elections had disgusted the populace, and that careful management had alone prevented an outbreak at the time of the coronation. Wildman, however, sent a strange message, that suggested that the near approach of action had frightened him, but pressed the Duke "above all things to take upon him the title of King," to provide himself with a broad seal, and to threaten great severities in his declaration to those who resisted him. Ten days later another message came urging a speedy descent; money was scraped together from various sources, and Monmouth sent another envoy to say that he was coming. Whatever might have been the previous misgivings, the die was now cast, and Monmouth was bound in honour to Argyle, as well as to his friends in England, to make the attempt. "Ferguson," says Burnet, "in his enthusiastical way, said it was a good cause, and God would not leave them unless they left Him."

Three weeks after Argyle had sailed, Monmouth embarked. The weather was very stormy, and it took some days to reach the ships, which were lying in the Texel. "We were stopped there," says Lord Grey, "by an order from the States-General, of which we had notice enough given us, and directions how to obey, which we observed the next morning by setting sail, though we were under arrest."

The blundering of Sir Bevil Skelton had greatly assisted the friendly efforts of the Schout of Amsterdam, who was in daily communication with Ferguson.

With only eighty-two followers, the Protestant Duke had started to "deliver a nation," and to wrest a crown. From the time of his father's death, he seems to have thrown himself with all his energy into the audacious attempt, and the preparation for it, in marked contrast to Argyle's arrangements, had been carried on with wonderful secrecy. The English Government were uncertain as to whether a blow was really meditated, although the States had agreed at their request to expel the Duke of Monmouth, the Earl of Argyle, and Ferguson; the double design was not discovered, and there was absolute ignorance as to where the stroke was to fall. Had the little expedition been successful, how differently would it have been judged! As it is, it has but served artistic annalists with a foil to the picture of the conquering hero of three years later. And for the three principals in the drama there has been reserved, for Monmouth the sympathy that his untimely fate and beauteous person naturally draw forth; for Lord Grey the impunity that his treachery did not merit; and for Ferguson the load of obloquy that some one must bear in all unfortunate political efforts. But though it has been the fashion to describe "the Plotter" as Monmouth's "evil genius," and to accept lightly the declarations of those who, to save themselves, threw on him the blame of all the miscarriages, it is impossible, with the knowledge of his character which we now possess, and the credit which it has been proved his previous narrative deserves, to treat with the scant respect that has hitherto been accorded to it the narrative written by him which Eachard has embodied in his history. His reflections upon the early phases of the undertaking, and the negotiations that preceded the embarkation, are

substantially corroborated by Hume's narrative, and are thus given by Eachard. "Concerning the Duke of Monmouth," says the Archdeacon, "and the bold expedition undertaken, we have some considerable light from a manuscript written by Mr. Ferguson himself, but never yet published . . . which, after a declaration, 'That there stands nothing inserted in it but what is exactly true,' proceeds thus:—'It is not without cause that we have been reflected upon both for having been precipitous in venturing into England, and for having adjusted our going to the most unhappy juncture that could have been pitched upon or imagined. For though it was a matter of vital importance, and wherein the miscarriage would be accompanied with fatal consequences to the nation as well as ourselves; yet we neither took time to concert it with persons of integrity, wisdom, or interest; nor had we the discretion to delay the execution of what we were designing till we had an answer from those we had sent over to certify our friends of our resolution, and to bespeak their concurrence and aid. Nor could there have been a more unhappy season calculated for such an attempt than during the session, both of the Parliament and of the term, when most gentlemen were obliged to be at London, and thereby not only out of capacity of rendering that service and assistance which we might have expected from them at another time, but many of them under a necessity by reason of their circumstances of joining in those votes and counsels by which we became branded for traitors and rebels, upon which they who had estates to lose were much discouraged from coming to our assistance. Neither was there a sufficient time between the first message sent into England to give friends intelligence of our design, and our hastening over to pursue it, as to allow them a competent space, either to discover those in whom they would confide, or dispose themselves where their presence

would be most useful, nor to settle those correspondences, and make such preparations that we expected from them, and which were needful to put our undertaking into a probable way of succeeding.

“All this the Duke of Monmouth was very sensible of, but suffered himself to be overruled contrary both to the dictates of his judgment and the bias of his inclination. For could he have been allowed to have pursued his own sentiments and resolutions, he intended to have spent that summer in the Court of Swedeland, where, out of the reach as well as suspicion of his enemies, he would have given matters at home time to ripen towards a revolution, afforded his friends leisure to have settled correspondences in the several parts of the kingdom, to have remitted money for providing a sufficient stock and magazine of ammunition and arms, and have matured all things for a conjunction with him upon his arrival the following spring. But from this he was diverted by the importunity of the Earl of Argyle, and prevailed upon by the advice and entreaty of my Lord Gray and Mr. Wade, contrary to the desires of Mr. Fletcher and Captain Mathews, to hasten into England. To which, I can say, that I had the least accession of any who were then about him, though I have had the unhappiness to be represented as the chief author and promoter of it, as well as of many other things whereof I am innocent.

“The Earl of Argyle having made preparations towards a descent into Scotland, and having, as he thought, disposed things there for his reception and assistance, he was not willing to lose the opportunity, lest besides the offending and alienating those whom he had drawn in and depended upon, the enemies through delay might come to understand what he and his friends had been projecting. Nor will any man think it strange that the Earl of Argyle, being inviolably

fixed in that resolution, should be earnest with the Duke of Monmouth to invade England at the same time; seeing it would not only oblige the King to divide his forces, and thereby leave the Earl to be withstood only by a part of the army, but would give encouragement to many in Scotland, who would have otherwise stood neuter, to join with the said Earl upon the intelligence of the Duke of Monmouth having made a descent into England, and that they two acted by concert. And so unreasonably forward was the Earl of Argyle of prosecuting what he had designed in Scotland, that he would not be prevailed upon to delay so much as one month, till the Duke could make some preparations, though far from proportionable to the undertaking he was hurrying him upon, and till he could receive answers from the messengers he had despatched into England, whereby he might know what assistance he was to expect from his friends. Nor would the Earl, after his own ominous haste, set sail for Scotland till he forced a promise from the Duke of embarking for England within so many days after: which the Duke, rather than suffer his honour to be stained, complied with as far as the weather would permit; though he found the observation of his word to interfere with his interest, as well as all the principles of prudence and discretion. And besides the impression which the importunity of the Earl of Argyle, seconded by the advice of several about the Duke, had upon him to hasten precipitously into England, before he had either made those preparations abroad, or settled those correspondencies at home which were necessary, he was sensible that to have declined engaging at that conjuncture would have occasioned many of the English who had fled into Holland, and were weary of continuing exiles from their country, not only to have abandoned him and to have gone with Argyle, but, in revenge for being hindered from returning home, to have loaded him with all the aspersions that persons exasper-

ated could have cast upon him. Moreover, he foresaw what a reflection it would have been upon him to remain idle and dormant beyond sea, at a season when the Earl of Argyle was acting for his country ; and how it would not only have been improved to his prejudice, by such whom the serving their own ends had reconciled to him, but would have greatly cooled the affections of those who had loved his person, and pursued his interest in conjunction with their own and that of the kingdom. So that, being brought under a necessity of venturing either his life or his honour, he chose to hearken to the dictates of generosity, rather than of wisdom, and thereupon to hazard into England before matters were ripe for the attempt. Which, as it was the first source of the miscarriage of his undertaking, so we may resolve our defeat at last into it, as a very natural, though seemingly a remote, cause.' ”

CHAPTER XI.

1685.

MONMOUTH'S REBELLION.

THE frigate which carried Monmouth and the two tenders slipped out of the Texel, but, meeting with adverse weather, tossed about the Channel for nineteen days. "During this tedious voyage," says Eachard, "Ferguson, as he afterwards related to particular friends, had a great desire to sound the Duke's inclinations, which were at present unknown to his followers; and one day, sitting by himself in a musing posture, the Duke gave him an opportunity by asking him in a pleasant way 'about what he was studying and thinking.' The other replied, as it were between jest and earnest, 'I am thinking to beg a particular favour of you, when you are King of England, that I may be your Prime Minister of State.' His Grace, perhaps without much thinking, made answer, 'I cannot do that; for I have designed,' or 'I am under an obligation, to grant that to the Lord ——,' by which Ferguson, as he said afterwards, made a double discovery."

It is probably to this that Clarke, in his Memoirs of James the Second, refers when he says: "When that unfortunate Duke was discussing at sea with those he had most confidence in, of what measures he should take at his landing, Ferguson advised him not to be too hasty in giving employments, but reserve them for baits to bring great men over to him. He said he would follow his counsel, and assured him he had promised none but only my Lord Sunderland that which he was now in possession of."

The principal persons who accompanied the Duke were Lord Grey, Fletcher of Salton, Ferguson, Wade, and Anthony Buyse, a German officer, who had been in the service of the Elector of Brandenburg. Ferguson held the post of chaplain to the army, and Monmouth was attended by his private chaplain, Mr. Hook, who, strangely enough, also became a strong Jacobite in after life. A tract published at Milan is responsible for the assertion that Ferguson was to have been Archbishop of Canterbury in the event of success.¹ On the 11th of June the little armament appeared off Lyme, in Dorsetshire, and Monmouth landed in the afternoon. Falling on his knees, he thanked God for their safe arrival; then, rising, drew his sword, and led his followers into the market-place, where their standard, a blue flag, was set up. To those who demanded 'Whom they were for?' they replied, "For the Protestant Religion," and a declaration was immediately read at the Cross.

This declaration has been vehemently assailed by Whig no less than Tory historians. Burnet says that the "manifesto was long and ill-penned: full of much black and dull malice: it was plainly Ferguson's style, which was both tedious and fulsome." Macaulay describes it as a libel of the lowest class. But it was viewed very differently by those to whom it was addressed, and we have seen that it had been carefully revised and adjusted in Holland to harmonise with the one that Argyle was to issue in Scotland. Goodenough afterwards declared that it "was writ by Mr. Ferguson, and was brought to the late Duke of Monmouth, Lord Grey, Mr. Wade, and Patshell to be approved of." While we, looking back upon events with the fuller information of posterity, and free from the heating influences of personal participation, can see much in it that should not have been there, it is true

¹ Fountainhall erroneously records that Monmouth "also made our Mr. Robt Ferguson his Secretary of State."

that it only expressed "what were the opinions and grievances of the time." Many of its strongest passages are paralleled by extracts from the Declaration of Rights, the Commons Journals, and the utterances of eminent historians, while the allegations against King James were the commonplaces of the Whig party, the current coin of faction at the time they were penned. The burning of London, the murder of Essex, the poisoning of the late King, were to be expected as a matter of course in any attack upon his Government; and, as one writer, not by any means partial to the author, has observed, "the initial paragraphs are moulded with a correctness, dignity, and simplicity not excelled by any constitutional declaration even in the honoured records of British history." Though both conclude with the same exhortation from the Old Testament, Monmouth's declaration presents a marked contrast to the companion manifesto of Argyle. Ferguson's balanced, if somewhat protracted, periods stand much higher as a specimen of literary style than the cumbrous and involved sentences of Stewart; and, while Argyle strikes at once the keynote of religious fanaticism, the southern insurgents mainly justify their action as provoked by assaults upon civil liberty and glaring infractions of the constitution. The document now read at Lyme was headed, "The Declaration of James Duke of Monmouth, and the noblemen, gentlemen, and others now in arms for the defence and vindication of the Protestant Religion, and the Laws, rights, and privileges of England from the Invasion made upon them; and for delivering the kingdom from the usurpation and tyranny of James Duke of York."

It commenced thus: "As Government was originally instituted by God, and this or that form of it chosen and submitted to by men, for the peace, happiness, and security of the governed, and not for the private interest of those that rule; so that Government hath always been

esteemed the best where the supreme magistrates have been vested with all the power and prerogatives that might capacitate them, not only to preserve the people from violence and oppression, but to promote their prosperity : and yet where nothing was to belong to them by the rules of the constitution that might enable them to injure and oppress them :

“ And it hath been the glory of England above most other nations that the Prince had all intrusted with him that was necessary either for the advancing the welfare of the people, or for his own protection in the discharge of his office ; and withal, stood so limited and restrained by the fundamental terms of the constitution, that without violation of his own oath, as well as the rules and measures of the Government, he could do them no hurt, or exercise any act of authority, but through the administration of such hands as stood obnoxious to be punished in case they transgressed ; so that, according to the primitive frame of the Government, the prerogatives of the Crown and the privileges of the subject were so far from jostling one another, that the rights reserved unto the people tended to make the King honourable and great, and the prerogatives settled on the Prince were in order to the subject’s protection and security :

“ But all humane things being liable to perversion as well as decay, it hath been the fate of the English Government to be often changed and wrested from what it was in the first settlement and institution. And we are particularly compelled to say, that all the boundaries of the Government have of late been broken, and nothing left unattempted, for turning our limited monarchy into an absolute tyranny. For such hath been the transactions of affairs within this nation for several years last past, that though the Protestant religion and liberties of the people were fenced in and hedged about by as many laws as the wisdom of man could

desire for their preservation against Popery and arbitrary power, our religion hath been all along undermined by Popish councils, and our privileges ravished from us by fraud and violence; and more especially the whole course and series of the life of the present usurper hath been but one continued conspiracy against the Reformed Religion and Rights of the nation."

Then follow a series of charges against James, of which some were but the ordinary missiles of factious politics, but others had too much foundation—his contriving the burning of London, his instigating a confederacy with France and a war with Holland, fomenting the Popish Plot and encouraging Godfrey's murder; his "forging treason against Protestants, and suborning witnesses to swear the patriots of our religion and liberties out of their lives;" the death of Essex; the clandestine cutting off of others to conceal it; procuring the prorogation and dissolution of Parliaments; "invading the throne, and usurping the title of a King;" avowing himself a Romanist; calling in a "multitude of priests and Jesuits, for whom the law makes it treason to come into the kingdom;" assisting at the mass, and "violating the law by the proclamations relative to the customs and excise." It was no extenuation that such proceedings were countenanced by an "extra-judicial opinion of seven or eight suborned and foresworn judges," for "by advancing those to the bench who were the scandal of the bar, and constituting those very men to declare the laws who were accused and branded in Parliament for perverting them, we are precluded all hopes of redress in Westminster Hall." "And through packing together, by false returns, new illegal charters, and other corrupt means, a company of men which he intends to stile a Parliament, he doth at once deprive us of all expectation of succour where our ancestors were wont to find it."

For all these reasons, and the results flowing from them, the conclusion is: "We are bound as men and Christians, and that in discharge of our duty to God and our country, and for satisfaction of the Protestant nations round about us, to betake ourselves to arms, which, we take heaven and earth to witness, we should not have done, had not the malice of our enemies deprived us of all other means of redress, and were not the miseries we already feel, and those which do further threaten us, worse than the calamities of war." The declaration then goes on to proclaim King James an assassin, a Popish usurper, "Traitor to the nation, and tyrant over the people;" to declare an intention to bring him to justice, and to offer mercy to all except those who, at this juncture, yield him aid and assistance. A promise is then given to maintain the Protestant religion, to repeal the penal laws against Protestant Dissenters, and to exercise general toleration. The just rights of Parliaments annually elected are to be maintained, the administration of justice to be reformed, the old charters of burghs and corporations to be revived, the Corporation and Militia Acts repealed, all proceedings of outlawry for treason, and under the penal acts against Protestants, to be made null and void, and laws made for preventing all military standing force except as authorised by Parliament. The Duke of York is charged with the death of King Charles, and the determination announced to prosecute him in terms of a resolution passed by the Commons at the time of the Popish Plot. The Duke of Monmouth's own claim is intimated, but not insisted on, and the conclusion of the declaration runs thus:—

"And forasmuch as the said James Duke of Monmouth, the now head and Captain-General of the Protestant forces of this kingdom, assembled in pursuance of the ends aforesaid, hath been, and still is, believed to have a legitimate and legal right to the crowns of England, Scotland, France,

and Ireland, with the dominions thereunto belonging, of which he doubts not in the least to give the world full satisfaction, notwithstanding the means used by the late King, his father, upon Popish motives, and at the instigation of the said James Duke of York, to weaken and obscure it, the said James Duke of Monmouth, from the generousness of his own nature, and the love he bears to those nations (whose welfare and settlement he infinitely prefers to whatsoever may concern himself) doth not at present insist upon his title, but leaves the determination thereof to the wisdom, justice, and authority of a Parliament legally chosen and acting with freedom; and in the meantime doth profess and declare, by all that is sacred, that he will, in conjunction with the people of England, employ all the abilities bestowed upon him by God and nature for the re-establishment and preservation of the Protestant Reformed Religion in these kingdoms, and for restoring the subjects of the same to a free exercise thereof, in opposition to Popery, and the consequences of it—tyranny and slavery; to the obtaining of which ends he doth hereby promise and oblige himself to the people of England to consent unto and promote the passing into laws of all the methods aforesaid, that it may never more be in the power of any single person on the throne to deprive the subjects of their rights, or subvert the fundamental laws of the Government designed for their preservation.

“And whereas the nobility, gentry, and commons of Scotland are now in arms upon the like motives and inducements that we are, and in prosecution of ends agreeable with ours; we do therefore approve the justice of their cause, commend their zeal and courage, expecting their, and promising our, assistance for carrying on that glorious work we are jointly engaged in.

“ And we make our appeal unto God, and all

Protestant kings, princes, states, and people, concerning the justice of our cause, and the necessity we are reduced unto of having our recourse to arms. And as we do beseech, require, and adjure all sincere Protestants and true Englishmen to be assisting to us against the enemies of the Gospel, rights of the nation, and liberties of mankind; so we are confident of obtaining the utmost aid and succour which they can yield us with their prayers, persons, and estates for the dethroning the said tyrant and Popish usurper.

“Nor do we doubt being justified, countenanced, and assisted by all Protestant kings, princes, and commonwealths, who do either regard the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or their own interest; and, above all, our dependence and trust is upon the Lord of Hosts, in whose name we go forth, and to whom we commit our cause, and refer the decision betwixt us and our enemies in the day of battle. ‘Now let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth good unto Him.’”

The declaration was received with enthusiasm, and men poured in from the surrounding country to take their places under the colours, that bore for their motto “*Pro religione et libertate.*” Monmouth is said to have enlisted more men in one day than the Prince of Orange did in ten, and, according to Ralph, “this sudden and surprising success” must be attributed to his declaration, which “coincided perfectly with the prejudices and passions of those it was principally addressed to.” “Numbers,” he adds, “hastened to partake in the glory of establishing a system of government that promised so fair to incorporate power and liberty.” But the unfortunate brawl, in which Fletcher of Salton shot down Dare, deprived Monmouth of his two best officers, and the first skirmish resulted in a check, through the cowardice of Lord Grey.

“Moreover,” writes Ferguson, “of the small number which

accompanied the Duke out of Holland, one was unfortunately killed soon after our landing, and before we were in a condition to march : which was occasioned by his own intemperate and unruly passion, and beyond the intention of the gentleman whose misfortune it was to do it ; who, having snatched his pistol into his hand for no other end, but to preserve himself from the other's rude assault with a cane, had the unhappiness unawares to shoot him, contrary to his thoughts and inclinations, and to his unconceivable grief. Nor was our loss hereby confined to him that fell, tho' therein we sustained considerable prejudice, by being deprived of a person whose acquaintance and esteem in that part of the kingdom rendered him useful to us above many others ; but the Duke, upon this deplorable accident, thought it necessary, to prevent murmuring among some of ourselves, as well as to remove occasion of resentment in the inhabitants of Taunton, where he promised himself a hearty welcome and considerable supplies, to advise the other gentleman for a time to withdraw ; but under a desire and command to return and meet him at a place which he named, where, alas ! we never had the happiness to arrive. And tho' the damage that befell us by the dismissing of that gentleman cannot easily be imagined or expressed ; yet this I may say towards giving an idea of it, that as he was a person who by his courage, military skill, civil prudence, application to business, and the interest he had in the Duke, would have contributed much to the conduct of our whole affairs, and have promoted the embracing all opportunities for action, attended with any probable success, so he would have done everything that could have been expected from a person of character and worth in a decisive engagement.

“Accordingly the very next morning after his withdrawing, we came to have a sensible proof of the injury the Duke had done himself and the cause in dismissing him. For, having

been designed to command the horse that were to be sent in conjunction with a select party of foot, to attack a body of the enemy that lay at Bridport, which was but six miles from us, my Lord Gray, upon his removal, came to have the trust devolved upon him, who, instead of acquitting himself as he ought to have done, not only forsook and abandoned the foot, but returned with tidings, 'That they were all cut off.' Whereas they not only faced the enemy for several hours after the flight of the horse, but marched back to the camp with the loss of a very few men; having taken several prisoners, and left more of the adversary, and some of them persons of quality, dead upon the spot. The ignominy and guilt of this is here charged peculiarly upon the Lord Gray; which occasioned that just but sharp reply of L.-Colonel Mathews, who upon the relation of that cowardly behaviour, being asked by the Duke, 'What he should do with my Lord Gray?' answered, 'That there was not a General in Europe that would have asked such a question but himself'—intimating thereby, that the least he deserved was to have had his commission taken from him, and to have remained branded for a poltrone. However it was, our want of success at that time, when we made our first attempt upon the enemy, both served to discourage many, and made the Duke afterwards unwilling to engage when he had the fairest advantages."

The story of the little campaign, so picturesque and so unfortunate, initiated by so slender a force, and followed by so terrible a retribution, has been frequently told, and we need not dwell upon its incidents longer than is necessary to recall the scenes through which Ferguson passed, and to reveal his share in the events.

One difficulty was averted by his readiness. "At first," says Dalrymple, "Monmouth was in straits for provisions. But Ferguson having assured him that he would find sub-

sistence for one day for the army if the Duke would give him the command of it for a minute, and the Duke having consented, Ferguson gave orders that the soldiers should observe next day as a solemn fast for success." On the 15th of June the Duke marched from Lyme with about 2000 foot and 300 horse. They soon came in sight of the Duke of Albemarle, who was in command of a body of Devonshire militia. Knowing Monmouth's popularity among the men of the west, Albemarle thought it best to retreat. His raw levies did so in confusion, but Monmouth did not attempt to pursue him. On the 18th the Duke marched into Taunton, where he was most enthusiastically received. Every house was decorated, and all the men wore in their hats green boughs, the badges of Monmouth's cause. Nor was the other sex less eager in its expressions of devotion. A band of twenty girls, of the best families, presented him publicly with colours they had embroidered, and their leader, who bore a drawn sword, handed to him "a small curious Bible." Monmouth replied, "I come to defend the truths contained in this book, and to seal them with my blood if occasion require it." One of these colours is described as "The Golden Flag, J. R., a crown;" and it is perhaps an evidence that Monmouth's partisans were ready to claim for him in advance the dignity which he immediately assumed. For now it was that a step was taken which has been generally attributed to Ferguson's instigation. Ferguson himself gives a different account, and the chief advocate seems to have been Lord Grey, who, as Monmouth afterwards told Lord Dartmouth, threatened to leave him if he did not consent. This was the assumption of the royal title, which was afterwards made a handle of by those who had failed to act up to their pledges to excuse their apathy, and, along with the declaration, constitutes the head and front of the offending laid to the charge of the chaplain of the rebel army. Wade, upon whose narrative

Mr. Fox avowedly bases the main lines of his history, and whose sympathies were Republican, ascribes the first counsel to Ferguson, but in another place attributes the action to the joint influence of him and Lord Grey. It is remarkable that Lord Grey's narrative contains nothing throwing light on the point. Williams, who was merely the Duke's servant, said in his examination that he "took the title of King by the advice of Ferguson, to bring in the gentry. Nelthorp, one of the old Rye-House men, who was also at Sedgemoor, and one of the two fugitives her hospitality to whom cost Lady Alice Lisle her life, declared on the scaffold, "As to the Duke of Monmouth's being declared King, I was wholly passive in it, I never having been present at any public debate of that affair; and never should have advised it, but complained of it to Colonel Holms and Captain Patchet. I believe the Lord Gray and Mr. F—— were the chief promoters of it." There remains only the evidence of Wade, who says that it was at Chard, two days before the arrival at Taunton, that the idea was first mooted: "And here began the first proposal of Mr. Ferguson to proclaim the Duke of Monmouth King; it was seconded by my Lord Grey, but easily run down by those that were against it. At Taunton the first council of war was held, and Wade relates that after it was over the Duke of Monmouth "took me and some others aside, and persuaded us that we should consent to his being proclaimed King; alleging that, according to the intelligence he had received, it was a great obstruction to his affairs, and the only reason why the gentlemen of the county came not in to him, being all averse to a commonwealth; which, as he said, they were all jealous we intended to set up; and promised us that he would the next day set forth a proclamation whereby he would make fresh promises to the people of the liberties that were promised to them by his declaration. We submitted to it, and it was done at the market-cross at Taunton, being read

by Mr. Tiley." In another place, inverting the order, Wade says that "Lord Grey and Ferguson persuaded Monmouth." His account is undoubtedly the best and most trustworthy as to all that took place of a military nature, and he must be acquitted of stating anything but what he believed to be true. But he says that his narrative, "which indeed amounts to little more than a journal of the marches and action of the army," is "the full of what I know," and adds that he was never with the Duke, but generally in the field, except when he came for orders, which was very seldom. It would therefore seem that while the statements of Wade, Nelthorpe, and Williams are sufficient to account for the want of credit which Fox and Macaulay give to Ferguson's narrative¹—being at the first blush the statements of three men against one, and that one a personage whose past Rye-House history told heavily against him—they are not, when closely examined with a regard to the position and opportunities of each individual, so irreconcilable with that narrative as has hitherto appeared to be the case. The taking of the royal title, while it did not hasten, failed to avert the disaster that followed; it was distasteful to not a few of Monmouth's followers, who had adopted the Republican notions that were current at the time among men so different as Sidney and

¹ Macaulay may remark, founding his judgment apparently in great measure on the narrative of Lord Grey, that "Ferguson, who was seldom scrupulous about the truth of his assertions, lied on this occasion like Bobadil or Parolles," and Mr. Fox may say that "Ferguson's want of veracity becomes so notorious that it is hardly worth while to attend to any part of his narrative;" but if these conclusions were reached in the absence of facts throwing most light on the disposition of the individual concerned, and if they proceed upon the statements of men themselves untrustworthy, and speaking under a pressure that was wanting in his case to make things look as well as possible for themselves, the account given by one who held the post of chaplain to the rebel army must command more credence than it has yet received. It is remarkable that an observant contemporary of Mr. Fox had already noticed one feature of the Plotter's career, borne out by more thorough examination, and inconsistent with a deceitful nature. "One touch," wrote Sir Walter Scott, "alone softens the character of this extraordinary incendiary: in all his difficulties he is never charged with betraying his associates."

Polwarth, Fletcher and Rumbold, Wade, West, and Wildman. Danvers, who was to head the rising in London, declared that it absolved him from his obligations. Ferguson's account of the matter comes after a notice of several errors in the expedition, which Eachard has not preserved, and is as follows:—

“ And thus I have recounted whatsoever may be thought to have laid the foundation of our miscarriage, or to have contributed towards it, except it be one thing, wherein all are not of the same opinion. And this is, ‘ that the Duke of Monmouth's assuming the title of king was not only a receding from his declaration, but a means of discouraging many from coming to his assistance; and thereby an occasion both of his own miscarriage, and of the ruin of the whole undertaking. In reference to which I think myself obliged to say that it was not from ambition that he chose at that juncture to take upon him the royal style, but that it proceeded from a necessity he conceived himself under, in order the better to pursue and attain those ends of his declaration wherein the deliverance and safety of the people were concerned. He judged it to be the giving the enemy too much advantage, through the Duke of York's being on the throne and *de facto* king, of proclaiming us all traitors, without putting himself into a capacity by taking the royal title of charging that upon his party of which they accused and criminated ours. For whatsoever men's inclinations were towards us, yet if they were any ways sagacious, they could not but see a vast difference between adhering to the Duke of York, which the Duke of Monmouth without assuming the name of king could not threaten to punish as a crime, and the promoting his Grace's interest, while it was branded with the name and stood liable to the penalties of high treason. Accordingly he had not only messages from some gentlemen, but was told by several Nonconforming ministers that came into the camp, ‘ that unless he took the style of king,

none who had estates to lose would venture themselves in his quarrel.' This I heard often said by many, and particularly in a meeting where several were assembled from different parts of the country to advise and persuade him to assume the kingship; and where, as Mr. Hook, the Duke's chaplain, can witness, I disputed against the conveniency of it *at that juncture*, with all the strength and vigour of mind that I could; though I have had the misfortune to be represented as the first author and chief promoter of it, which I am willing at present to bear, and digest the aspersion with the same patience that I do many worse calumnies.

"Nor," he proceeds, "is it strange that this should be the sense of the most discreet and greatest part of the people, it being pursuant and consonant to the practices of their ancestors; for when Edward the Fourth, being attainted in Parliament, came with force into the kingdom against Henry the Sixth, pretending to challenge only his inheritance of the Duchy of York, the Lords told him, 'that they neither would nor durst join with him unless he would style himself king,' which he immediately did, notwithstanding it was a departing from his first pretence. And I cannot omit that even Colonel Danvers, who hath so severely censured that action of the Duke, and made it his plea for not rising and heading a party in London as he had promised, not only sent to the Duke before he came over, advising him to take the title of king, but said when he heard he had assumed it, 'that it would be of more advantage and importance to him than twenty thousand men.' Nor could the Duke's taking the style of king be the reason of that false and cowardly man's not rising in the City as he had undertaken in his messages to us and his promises to others, and as he was importuned by many, whom by assurances of it he had hindered and diverted from ventur-

ing to us into the country: seeing after he knew of the Duke's being cloathed with that title he despatched two messengers to our army to confirm his preparations and resolution for stirring, and that he only waited to know the time when he should begin, and to receive the Duke's commands for authorising of it. But the true ground of that treacherous man's falsifying his engagements to us, and disappointing the expectations of those in and about the City that depended upon him, was want of courage and integrity. For Mr. Parrot, who intimately knew him, and had been a witness of former instances of his cowardice and deceit, told me while we were flattering ourselves with the hopes of his stirring, 'that he had neither truth nor valour to render him worthy to be relied on; and that fear would prevail over him to the frustrating what he had the confidence to undertake, and to the total ruin of our cause if we trusted to him for its support.'

"Nor did it appear that the Duke's assuming the royal title discouraged men from coming to our assistance, since we not only enrolled a whole regiment of foot, besides horse, at Taunton, where he was first proclaimed, but greater numbers presented themselves afterwards to offer their services than we had found and observed before. Though by reason of our wanting arms wherewith to supply them, there was not that proportion continued with us, as there did of those who joined us ere our stores were empty; but they were forced to return home, and we necessitated to allow it, being destitute of weapons to bestow upon them. And though the Duke's taking the royal style might seem a departing from the words of his declaration, yet it was very consonant to the claim he made in it, and most agreeable to several clauses therein affirmed and asserted. For as the declaring against James Duke of York as an usurper, and publishing himself to be the lawful and legitimate son of King

Charles II., was a plain claiming his being king *de jure*; so whether he should assume the name (abstracting from his promise), discretion and modesty, and not right and justice, were concerned; and consequently to be a king, provided all the other parts of his declaration stood secured in which he might accommodate himself to the necessity of his affairs, and comply best with those measures that had the greatest tendency to his success: which he believed the assuming the name of king would do. And therefore, as he in a second declaration, after he had taken the royal title, confirmed and secured all the other parts, promises, and engagements of his first, so he signified the grounds that had made him recede from the clause in the first, that barred his claiming the name of king, without the concurrence of a Parliament, hoping that the necessity which enforced him to it would have justified it."

Ferguson might have added that the Duke's action was thoroughly consistent with his pledges to Sir Patrick Hume and the Scots, as told by Hume; for he had intimated his claim, and indicated that his assumption of the title while campaigning was a matter of policy to be decided by the advice of his friends, while the ultimate settlement of the succession and its tenure was reserved to the Parliament.

Oldmixon, "the bitterest of the Whig historians," as Macaulay terms him, states the opinion of the time about the matter, and perhaps also indicates the chief reason that has swayed writers of his political persuasion to lay all that miscarried upon Ferguson's shoulders: "I have been assured by persons who were with Monmouth, and in his confidence, that he never thought of it till after he landed and was put upon it by that arch-traitor and villain Ferguson, whose treasonable practices since may very well make us suspect he was a spy on him, and a secret agent for the King." But though this last insinuation has been

taken up by others as bigoted, if not so bitter, there is nothing to support it beyond the rumours to which the Plotter's almost miraculous escapes gave rise. In the circumstances in which he was now placed there was a strong dash of fanaticism in the ardour of his enthusiasm; and the anecdotes of his actions, though evidently exaggerated, vividly recall the peculiarities of the most ardent of the Scottish Covenanters. "Ferguson," says Burnet, with his usual sneer, "ran among the people with all the fury of an enraged man that affected to pass for an enthusiast, though all his performances that way were forced and dry."

CHAPTER XII.

1685.

SEDGEMOOR FIGHT—AND AFTER.

MONMOUTH proclaimed himself King on the 20th of June, and, having in his new character issued several proclamations against the sitting Parliament, all who collected taxes for King James, and the Duke of Albemarle, moved from Taunton on Sunday the 21st. Ferguson seems to have preached before the army marched. The vicar had fled, and he went to his house, where he found only a servant maid, from whom he borrowed his scarf and gown. As the troops marched out 7000 strong, amid the plaudits of the populace, the excitement of the hour carried him away, and, waving his drawn sword, he is said to have exclaimed, "I am Ferguson!—that famous Ferguson, for whose head so many hundred pounds have been offered!—I am that man, I am that man!" The reaction from concealment, disguise, and banishment was great, and the exhilaration of spirit he felt in being once more a free man on English soil, with an army beside him, the justice of whose cause then seemed to him the best omen of success, found vent in a burst of mingled exultation and defiance.

But the chief of the little army had not the fire and vigour of its chaplain, and, slight as the weapon was with which he was to strike for the crown, its effect was less than it might have been from the indecision with which it was wielded. The game to be played undoubtedly was to strike

suddenly and fiercely at one of the bodies of militia gathering around, and score a success to rouse the broken spirits of the party throughout the country, and encourage the raw levies, before the King's regular forces could arrive. The enthusiasm continued; at Bridgewater 160 horsemen joined, and those who applied for arms were so much in excess of the supply, that the first company was formed of the scythemmen, who became the most characteristic feature of the campaign. The Duke moved northwards, and at Glastonbury there was witnessed a scene in striking contrast to the gay reception in the streets of Taunton. The army arrived after a long march in pouring rain, and the foot were quartered in the abbey and churches, "making very great fires." An attempt on Bristol was proposed, but the weather delayed it, and an alarm from a sudden attack of horse, and the news that the royal forces were approaching, altered the Duke's resolution. It was debated whether to press on by the banks of the Severn to the friends in Shropshire and Cheshire, or to move towards Wiltshire, and the latter plan was adopted. The Duke had been shamefully deceived as to the willingness or the capacity of his friends throughout the country to rise; he sent his private chaplain, Mr. Hook, to London, with positive orders to his supporters there to move, Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Jones giving the messenger tokens to those he was to speak with. But no effort was made, and no one endeavoured to co-operate elsewhere. At Philips-Norton, a week after leaving Taunton, Monmouth complained that "all people had deserted him," and, in spite of a successful skirmish, in which the King's forces, under the Duke of Grafton, were beaten off with sharp loss, he withdrew his army under cover of night to Frome. There the crushing news of Argyle's discomfiture was received. It was even canvassed whether Monmouth, and the others who had come from Holland, should flee the country, and leave

those who had flocked to his standard to take advantage of the indemnity. But, though a couple of cravens made off, bolder counsels prevailed, and it has been said that those who did leave were sent by Ferguson and others to buy arms and ammunition in Amsterdam.¹ The brief campaign came to a crisis on the 6th of July. On Sunday the 5th, the little army found itself for the second time in Bridgewater, while the royal forces lay not far off on the plain of Sedgemoor. The spirit of the western men was good; many of them had been allowed to visit their families, but they loyally returned to their colours, and were hearty in the cause. On that memorable Sunday Ferguson preached to the army in the Castle Field, from the solemn words in the twenty-second verse of the twenty-second chapter of Joshua, "The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, He knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord, save us not this day."

The scouts had brought word that the royal army kept negligent discipline, and Monmouth determined to surprise it under cover of darkness. In the afternoon he ascended the church tower, from whence the royal lines could be discerned. Recognising the uniform of Douglas's regiment, the oldest military body in Christendom, and subsequently the first of the British line, of which he had been the honoured Colonel, he remarked, "I know these men; they will fight, and if I had them I should not doubt of success." If the chaplain accompanied him, his northern blood would suggest the same desire for the aid of the gallant successors of the old Scots Guard of France. At seven o'clock in the evening the drums beat to arms, and many of the officers were seen going to prayers in red coats and jackboots. Such

¹ Such is the evidence of Tillier, a lieutenant who had been trepanned into the expedition, and who repeats a cock-and-bull story that "Cragg was to kill the King at Windsor or at the Lord Mayor's show, and have for doing the deed £10,000 from Ferguson."

a sight had not been seen in England since the Restoration, and such an occasion has not for two hundred years been seen again. At eleven o'clock on the summer evening Monmouth rode out of the castle, and set his troops in motion for Sedgemoor. It was a strange spectacle for the closing hours of Sunday in an English country town, and even the children, who watched the handsome Duke go past, noticed an "alteration in his look." He knew the stake that was being played, what soldiers were, and the task that lay before his brave but undisciplined infantry, and the rabble of untrained horse. Yet the attack was near proving a complete success; but a third deep ditch, of which the assailants were ignorant, just in front of the royal lines, checked their advance at the critical moment, as "Dumbarton's Drums" summoned the Royal Scots to arms. One volley from that famous regiment scattered the rebel horse, but the brave peasantry of the west behaved in different fashion; animated by the inspiring war-cry of "God with us," they stood their ground gallantly, and there was waged "as fierce a battle as perhaps was ever fought in England in so short a time." Monmouth bore himself bravely in the *mêlée*, but a panic seized the drivers of the wagons in attendance on his force, and the cry of no more ammunition was raised. Meanwhile the royal cavalry charged the flanks of the rebels, Churchill skilfully handled the infantry of the King, and Monmouth, at last seeing that all was lost, rode from the field, and the battle resolved into a rout. To his own narrative Eachard adds: "Besides this account, it will be worth the reader's knowledge to have that of the forementioned manuscript of Mr. Ferguson's, who fully exposes the faults and neglects of his party in this following manner: 'But I need only relate the behaviour of our horse at Sedgemoor, as being more than enough to leave a perpetual character of reproach upon them, as it brought a total ruin upon our whole army. For

the officers that knew how to conduct troops being absent on services enjoined on them by the Duke, the greatest part of those upon whom the command fell that fatal morning performed nothing of the duty that ought to have been expected from them. The experience we had before of my Lord Grey was enough to have discouraged the Duke from putting him at the head of all the troops; and it made Colonel Mathews advise him to divide his cavalry, that so the charge and conduct of one part might be devolved upon some person of courage, answerable to the criticalness of the season, and the importance of the action. But the Duke, by a strange fatality, declined following this advice, saying, "that he would not affront my Lord, and that what he had given him in charge was easy to be effected." So that Grey having all the horse committed to him, the first thing he did, after we were drawn up, and in view of the enemy's fires, was his dismissing the guide, who was to have directed him in the ground where we were to march, and to have shown him where with no inconveniency we might have fallen upon the enemy's infantry. By which means some of our troops, by reason of the darkness of the morning, and their ignorance of the ground, came to be imbogged in a morass, which occasioned delay as well as confusion. Nor was this the worst, for the two troops that were commanded to advance first, and to fall into the enemy's lines, found themselves, after they had received their fire and thought there remained no more but boldly to attack them, fronted and hindered both by a ditch and another morass, that caused them to retreat disordered and dispersed; which would have been easily avoided by the help of a guide, the ditch and morass being of no considerable extent, and scarce covering any more of their camp, than where it was our misfortune to attempt an impression. Now besides these two troops, whose officers, tho' they had no great skill, yet

had courage enough to have done something honourably had they not, for want of a guide, met with the foresaid obstruction, there was no one of all the rest of our troops that ever advanced to charge, or approach so near to the enemy as to give or receive a wound. Mr. Hacker, one of our captains, came no sooner within view of their camp, than that he treacherously and villainously fired a pistol to give them notice of our approach, and then forsook his charge, and rode off with all the speed he could, to take the benefit of a proclamation emitted by the King, offering pardon to all such as should abandon us and return home within such a time. And this I have been told he pleaded at his tryal, in order to save his life, but was answered by Jeffreys, "That he above all other men deserved to be hanged, and that for his treachery to Monmouth as well as his treason against the King."

"And though," proceeds he, 'no other of our officers acted so villainously, and with that baseness forsook the field, yet they were useless and unserviceable in it, as never once attempting to charge, nor so much as keeping their men in a body and figure to make a show, and I dare affirm, that if our horse had never fired a pistol, but only stood in a posture to have given jealousy and apprehension to the enemy, our foot alone would have carried the day and been triumphant. But our horse standing scattered and dis-united, and flying upon every approach of a squadron of theirs commanded by Oglethorp, gave that body of their cavalry an advantage, after they had hovered up and down in the field, without thinking it necessary to attack those whom their own fears had dispersed, to fall in at last in the rear of our batallions, and to wrest that victory out of their hands which they were grasping at and stood almost possessed of. Nor was that party of their horse above 200 or three at most, whereas we had more than enough, had

they had any courage, and been commanded by a gallant man, to have attacked them with ease both in front and flank.

“‘ These things I can declare with more particularity and certainty, because I was a doleful spectator and observer of them ; for having, contrary to my custom, left attending upon the Duke, who advanced with the foot, I betook myself to the horse, because the first and most considerable of that morning’s action was expected from them, which was to break in and disorder the enemy’s camp, against the time that our batallions should come up. I endeavoured whatsoever I was capable of performing, or that lay within my circle as a private man ; for I not only struck at several troopers who had forsaken their station, but upbraided divers of the captains for being wanting in their duty ; but I spake with great warmth to my Lord Grey, and conjured him ‘ to charge and not to suffer the victory, which our foot had in a manner taken hold of, to be ravished from us.’ But instead of hearkening and complying with anything I said, he not only, as an unworthy man and a cowardly poltroone, deserted that part of the field and forsook his command, but rode with the utmost speed to the Duke, telling him, ‘ That all was lost, and that it was more than time to shift for himself.’ Whereby, as an addition to all the mischief he had been the occasion of before, he drew the easy and unfortunate gentleman to leave the batallions, while they were courageously disputing on which side the victory should fall. And this fell most unhappily out while a certain person was endeavouring to find out the Duke, to have begged of him to come and charge at the head of his own troops, which tho’ standing scattered had not yet abandoned the field. However, this I dare affirm, that if the Duke had been master but of 200 horse, well mounted, completely armed, personally valiant, and commanded by brave experienced

officers, they would not only have signified more than all he had that day in the field, which amounted to near a thousand, but he could not have failed of being victorious. This is acknowledged by our enemies, who have often confessed that they were ready to fly through the impressions made upon them by our foot, and must unavoidably have been beaten had our horse behaved themselves in any measure as they ought, and not have tamely looked on till their cavalry retrieved the day by falling into the rear of our batallions. Nor was the fault in the private men who had courage to have followed their leaders; but it was in those that commanded them, and particularly in my Lord Grey, in whom, if cowardice may be called treachery, we may safely charge him with betraying of our cause by his behaviour at that time.' And then he concludes his account of the battle in these words: 'If any of our officers shall think themselves reflected upon, I hope they will be as favourable to me, who have but truly and justly represented them, as they were that morning to their enemies, and that I shall receive no more hurt from them upon the account of this narrative, than their adversaries did in the engagement upon Sedgemore.'"

It is not here our task to tell how the unfortunate Monmouth was captured, and to repeat the sad story of his execution, but the interlude of self-abasement which occurred between his valour on the field and composure on the scaffold must be adverted to, because it has a bearing on the character of his associate. In the interview with the King, in which he stooped to sue for his neck, Reresby relates "he threw all the blame on the Earl of Argyle, and Ferguson, who had stirred him up to it;" while the Buccleuch Manuscript represents him as saying that "Ferguson was chiefly the person that instigat him to set up his title of king, and had been a main adviser and controller of the

whole affair, as well to the attempting as acting what was done; that it was Ferguson that penned the declaration, and published it afterwards, and had the greatest share in the worst design and worst resolution that was taken." Sir John Bramston tells the same story, in words which graphically bring the scene before us: "As to the declaration, Monmouth said, 'Ferguson drew it, and made me sign it, before ever I read it.' That so angered the King that he said, 'This is trifling; would you sign a paper of such consequence, and not read it?' So he turned from him, and bid him prepare to dye." In an interview with the Lord Privy Seal, Lord Clarendon, Monmouth spoke in similar language. Clarendon reminded him that he had been long before convinced of the character of his associates; that he had said frequently, in the hearing of many persons, that they were knaves and villains; that he had declared to the late King, "that Ferguson was a bloody rogue, and always advised to the cutting of throats." Evelyn noted on July 15th: "Monmouth was this day brought to London, and examined before the King, to whom he made great submission, acknowledged his seduction by Ferguson the Scot, whom he named the 'bloody villain.'" Kennet records that, to one of the divines who attended him, Monmouth "expressed himself with some indignation against the Lord Shaftesbury, complaining, 'He is a tricky man,' and more especially against Ferguson, 'who (says he) is a bloody villain.'" How far this was Monmouth's own opinion, or to what extent he was bidding for favour at the expense of another, it is impossible to judge. Even in the dreadful circumstances in which the Duke was placed, it was a poor return for the exertions Ferguson had made in his service, and the terrible risk he had run at his solicitation two years before. So far as the general relations of the two are concerned, it is not easy to see the grounds for the unmeasured

condemnation which Whig historians have passed on Ferguson on that account, or for the manner in which the partisans of William of Orange have criticised the attempt of Monmouth. In after years, Hampden, going back in his mind to the days of the Rye-House Plot, remarked that the expedition of William was simply a continuation of the Council of Six, and the observation is as true of the invasion of Monmouth. The one was as much in the spirit of the party who introduced the Exclusion Bill as the other, and the difference, as far as Whig principles are concerned, lay not so much in principle as in success. But a defeated insurrection brings down the vengeance of power upon all who are supposed to be disaffected, and those who would have been the most eager to welcome the conqueror are often the readiest to complain of his temerity and to censure his turbulence, when smarting under the lash which his miscarriage has brought down. That this was so now, as far as Ferguson was concerned, is evident enough; and we shall have to notice a curious confirmation of it from a quarter sufficiently hostile. The three main charges brought against him have reference to the original incitement to the invasion, the declaration published, and the assumption of the royal title. As to the first of these Ferguson declares—and the assertion is consonant with probability—that the most active in forcing on the expedition at the time it was made were the Earl of Argyle, Lord Grey, and Mr. Wade. Of the declaration—of which Fox says, “Far the most guilty act of Monmouth’s life was his lending his name to the declaration which was published at Lyme; and in this instance Ferguson, who penned the paper, was both the adviser and the instrument”—he must share the responsibility; but, granting the existence of unconstitutional designs on the part of James sufficient to warrant the invasion of William, allowing for the calumnies of faction which deform it, and remembering

the heated and jaundiced light in which events were regarded at the moment, we must concede that it was not unsuited to the temper of the time. If the principle fought for should ever sanctify somewhat the means, much may be pardoned in those struggling "For Liberty and the Protestant Religion." As to the assumption of the royal title, Ferguson has stated the reasons for it, and his objections when it was first mooted seem to have been "to the conveniency of it *at that juncture*," while its main advocate was Lord Grey, who was ever forward except on the field of battle. It would, indeed, appear that in this whole expedition his conduct and assertions have been judged offhand in the character which in one of his letters he observes the Government had fixed upon him at the time of the Rye-House Plot. The "miseries of Scotland" and the "interest of England" were the great motives which everything he wrote proves to have actuated him, and if, like others, misguided, he seems to have been at least equally sincere.

It by no means follows from his activity in arranging a combined effort in England and Scotland, that he actually pressed the attempts at the moment they were made. The establishment of co-operation between Argyle and Monmouth was one thing, the working out of that co-operation in the best possible manner to secure its full results was quite another. A Scotsman who was an English exile might be capable of obtaining the first, and yet find it beyond his power to restrain his countrymen till things were ready elsewhere. Argyle certainly forced the hand of Monmouth, and probably he and his hot-headed confederates forced the hands of some of Monmouth's associates also. Ferguson's full grasp of the situation at the time of the Rye-House Plot would make him sufficiently cognisant of the importance of feeling some of the ground before embarking on the enterprise; and from the confidence which Monmouth reposed in

him, from even the extent to which Monmouth laid the blame of everything upon him, it is clear that the Duke relied greatly on his sagacity and skill. If the reports furnished by the English agents had been trustworthy, the campaign should have had a very different history. The struggle of Argyle was unexpectedly feeble, and the divisions in his councils threw away a position of great natural strength. The exiles in Holland were entitled to reckon on a much more prolonged strife in Scotland than actually took place; the arrangements of two years before warranted them in believing that the support in England would be extensive and widespread. Therefore, although the wiser heads among them would probably have deferred the actual combined invasion for some time, there was prudence as well as honour in favour of at once seconding Argyle. Monmouth and his friends were led upon the ice by Trenchard and men like him in the west, no less than by Wildman and his confederates in London. To defer action after Argyle had sailed was to abandon it altogether, to betray him, and to make King James's position impregnable: to sacrifice apparently the only hope of delivering their country from oppression, and to condemn themselves to perpetual exile.

It is almost impossible fairly to judge the possibilities of the situation in the spring of 1685, without the opinion being swayed by the course of subsequent events. Whether Monmouth were the right heir to the crown or not, a large party believed it, and he had to be out of the way before men could unite on the Prince of Orange. The flaw in his title pleased some; his military reputation was high; his personality captivated many; and his title was certainly as good as that of William of Orange when he landed upon the same coast. The chances were remote that King James would unite the nation temporarily against him, but it was

extremely likely that his power would consolidate and his policy press with increasing weight on the defeated party who had tried to exclude him from the throne. The Papist Duke and the Protestant Duke had long been pitted against each other, and Monmouth seemed destined to be the head of the Protestant party. In this light Ferguson had looked upon him two years before, and in spite of the incidents that had occurred showing the instability of his character, no one else possessed the high qualifications that he still retained. Shaftesbury, Russel, and Sidney were all gone; the blast had left but one of the great leaders of the Whigs. Ferguson has placed on record that his own convictions were in favour of a limited monarchy, and from beginning to end of his career he retained that opinion. He was convinced that it was the only form of government practicable in England, and he has stated that he looked upon Monmouth as the best champion of the public cause. If, indeed, the pressure of events had not caused the Duke to depart from the attitude assumed in the declaration, his position toward the Crown and the Parliament would have been practically that of the Prince of Orange three years later. The Prince never found himself forced from his attitude of reserve, as Monmouth was, by the hanging back of the gentry. To a constitutional philosopher desiring to establish the form of things that existed in England after the Revolution, it would have seemed that Monmouth's peculiar position offered the best facilities for the operation. His character, his birth, his surroundings all favoured it. The remedy for the constitutional evils ultimately adopted was to break the direct chain of succession, but to retain the royal blood; to assert the supremacy of Parliament, but to conserve the hereditary line. How could that have been better done than by calling James III. to the throne by a vote of the Houses? Ferguson had precedents to justify

the course, and he had probably adopted that solution of affairs in his own mind on public grounds. But he had also a special regard for Monmouth himself. His references to him in the Rye-House narrative are expressed in language that leaves no doubt of his being his attached supporter, and if circumstances had occurred in the interval to weaken the bond, the intercourse in Holland seems to have renewed it. Inconstant as Monmouth was, he perhaps was all the better able to overcome in a personal interview the suspicions and resentments his infidelities had aroused. But it does not appear how far Ferguson was cognisant of the language used by the Duke about him in his conferences with King Charles. It is not improbable that subsequent knowledge of it, and of the piteous exhibition before King James, was a potent factor in swaying him to think over the actions of the past, to repent his adherence to a questionable cause, and to test and try the reality of the various influences that had steeled him to bitter hostility against King James.

But up to this period at least, his conduct is intelligible, consistent, and based on a distinct policy continuously pursued. Civil and religious liberty secured by a monarch on the throne, limited in fact, was the goal at which he was aiming. In 1683 it had seemed possible to secure it by putting constraint on the reigning sovereign and excluding the Popish successor. In 1685 it was only possible by substituting a Protestant for a Popish King. It would have been preferable that this should have been achieved by deferring the Protestant aspirant's claim to the judgment of Parliament, for this was not only constitutionally desirable, but of considerable practical importance in dealing with avowed Republicans, but the stern exigencies of civil war rendered it impracticable. To fight one who was King *de jure* and *de facto* with a hypothetical title sufficient to infer the pains of treason, but insufficient to evoke the loyalty of

men who had estates to lose, and remembered the confiscations of the Commonwealth, was struggling with one hand bound behind the back. The true reading of Ferguson's share in those stirring events that were followed by scenes so tragic, seems to be that he thought the exigencies of the time demanded prompt and bold action; that Monmouth was the only eligible chief to choose; that success could only result in his acquiring the character of King, and an early assumption of the title, while it should be avoided if possible, was no real infringement of his obligations, and a question of policy to be determined wholly by the circumstances of the campaign, in accordance with the interest of the great public cause for which the sword was drawn.

But to return to his adventures after Sedgemoor fight. The darling of the people and of Lady Henrietta Wentworth, who had signed the obnoxious declaration, was shorter by the head; the quarters of the poor wretch who had printed it were bleaching on the City gates; but the audacious draughtsman was nowhere to be found. "How Ferguson escaped," says Macaulay, "was, and still is, a mystery." "Ferguson," wrote Reresby, "that arch-Presbyterian priest and rebel, and Lord Grey, were taken in disguise three days afterwards." Writing a little later, Sir John Bramston says, "Ferguson is not taken yet, and some say he is fled into Holland." On 8th July, Evelyn noted: "The arch-boute-feu Ferguson, Mathews, etc., are not found yet." "He was taken," writes Sir Walter Scott, "the third day after the battle of Sedgemoor, and James freely pardoned and dismissed him, to counsel and assist the next conspiracy." "Why he should be spared," remarks Ralph, "surpasses the power of conjecture, and no one circumstance remains on record to assist our conclusions." He certainly was not pardoned, was one of those excepted from the amnesty of 10th March 1686, and one of the thirteen ex-

cluded from the later general pardon of September 1688. "After the battle of Sedgemoor," said Wade, "I got my horse, and with about twenty officers and others, among which was Ferguson, I went westward. . . . We went to Ilfracombe, and seized on a vessel, which we victualled and put to sea, but were forced ashore by two frigates cruising on the coast, after which we dispersed and fled into the woods." From the *London Gazette*, and from Goodenough's confession—who had been one of the party with Wade, and, in his examination on 20th July, said he believed "Ferguson is in the country"—Macaulay concludes it to be clear that a fortnight after the battle he had not been caught, and was supposed to be still lurking in England. Tillier, in his confession, said that after the battle was over, Ferguson, Wade, and Tyley "consulted together which way to set up a free state, since Monmouth was no more in being," and also reported that "at a house in Exmoor there was Furgosen and six more harbred after they came from Coombe." At the trial of Fernley and Mrs. Gaunt, for giving shelter to fugitives in London, Fernley declared that on a Sunday three weeks after Sedgemoor, when Burton lay hid in his house, one Gaunt came in and said that two others had just got beyond sea. Fernley asked him, "Do you hear of Ferguson?" "No!" he replied, "I hear nothing of him as yet, but in a little time I may hear from him." It would therefore seem that he had lurked for some time in the western counties, and may possibly have made his escape from the shores of the Severn Sea. "Nine of the rebels," says Fountainhall, "(among whom our Ferguson was supposed to be one), fled in ane open boat to Amsterdam." He eventually made his way in safety to the Continent, and again found refuge in Holland.

Once more the satirists of the opposite party had food for their wit in the misfortunes of their opponents, and in

"The Hue and Cry after James Duke of Monmouth, etc.," there occurs this passage: "For Ferguson, you may find him in some conventicle, holding forth to the saints in tribulation, that it would please the Lord to prosper their king-killing treasons and soul-saving conspiracies; or, if they be found out in their devices, that they may not fall into the hands of the wicked; that in the day of their trial, He may preserve their throats from the axe and their necks from the halter."

Roger L'Estrange, whom we have seen Ferguson once bespeaking a party to seize, devotes a considerable part of the *Observer* of 1st August 1685 to him, and while, of course, handling him hardly enough, seems to consider that he was then being treated very ungratefully by his own party. He also refers to the strange rumours about him, which were floating through London. The paper is in the form of a dialogue between the Tory "Observer" and a "Trimmer," and the Trimmer says:—

"'Twas an odd kind of business that same story of Ferguson. He has been taken at least five-and-twenty times, and let go again; I have it (without fooling) for certain, that he was really taken. But betwixt you and me, the man is a plain Jesuit, and, when they found that once, they e'en let him slip through their fingers. 'Twas he, and nobody else, that drew the Duke of Monmouth in, and all the sober people in the party wish him at the devil for his pains."

After a little the "Observer" takes up the subject again:—

"*Obs.*—But a word or two now to the business of Ferguson, and prithee wilt thou consider in that man the transitory state of mortals. It was but the work of one hour to transform him from a child of grace into a vessel of reprobation; from a saint into a devil; 'twas only the issue of the battle that turned the white angel into a black one.

"*Trim.*—What d'ye talk of Ferguson to me for, as if I took his part? Why, the man's a Jesuit, I tell ye, and all this clatter about him is only a copy of your countenance.

"*Obs.*—Well, and how long has he been of the Society? Where did he take his orders? How came this secret to sleep so long? or who brought it to light now? So long as there was any hope of destroying the King and his Government, who but Ferguson for the good genius of the faction? Nothing prospered against the King and the Church, either in the schism or the rebellion, but under the auspicious influence of his blessing and direction. What was it but Ferguson's incantation that turned so many men into beasts, and whence came these profane and delusive labels of [Fear nothing but only God] and [God with us] but out of that hallowed mouth? Was it not his pen that asserted the cause? Was it not his head that contrived the methods? and was it not his authority that pushed the conspiracy into action? Was he not at once the supreme head, governor, and metropolitan of the schism? Was he not the oracle of the party in all cases of politiques as well as of conscience and divinity? Was he not Shaftesbury's right hand, and the idol of the gaping staring rabble from one end of the damnable hellish Popish phanatical plot to the other? Was not his approbation the test of all virulent lyes and slanders? Was it not his benediction that gave life and courage to the most butcherly design of barbarous cruelties that ever was heard of? And did he not go on still animating the rebels upon the spot and action, in the name of God and religion, to do the devil's business?—Even till Divine vengeance overtook both himself and his disciples in the very heat and hope of their enterprize? Who but Ferguson all this while for their casuist? and their *Ductor dubitantium* in all questions of pretended conscience or scruple? And who

but Ferguson again for their Prime Minister in all difficulties of policy or State? And yet they could find out nothing all this while in his counsels and resolutions, but divine impulses and motions of the Holy Ghost?—though, let me tell you, Trimmer, the course of his life was as impious as the imposture of his principles, and the bloody violence of his nature lay as open in his conversation and libels, as in this last encounter of these two armies. Now, all the inhumane, deliberate, and palpable impieties, so long as they were found serviceable to the ‘True Protestant Interest,’ were looked upon as [the Power of Godliness] in him, and [no sin to be seen in the saint] till the rebels had lost all in a total and irreparable defeat: and then the disaster presently made him moult his religion and cousen the Devil with a Jack of Leyden in the shape of a Jesuit.

“*Trim.*—What if you should take a little breath now?

“*Obs.*—While ’tis to be had, you ’ll say; but Ferguson and the Observator must not part yet till I have given you an account of the most dreadful expostulation and appeal: the most daring challenge of Ferguson’s to God Almighty that ever passed the lips of any mortal, perhaps, with so horrid a solemnity.

“The day before the fatal battle, and rout of the western rebels, Ferguson held forth hell and damnation to ’em upon this text: ‘The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, He knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord, save us not this day.’—Josh. xxii. 22.

“The spirit of delusion put this piece of Scripture into the mouth of the false prophet, and Divine vengeance took him at his word, [Deal with us (he says) according to the justice or injustice of our cause: if we be innocent, save us; if guilty, confound us.] This was the condition of his appeal, which was answered as by a voice from heaven in

the sentence of the day following, when his prayer was returned in a curse, both upon himself and his whole party, and the cause adjudged to be a most impious rebellion; adjudged, I say, by so remarkable a stroke of God's avenging justice, that the victory was no other than a judicial decision of the controversy."

Had Ferguson accompanied Argyle instead of Monmouth, and had he been taken in the West of Scotland, instead of escaping from the West of England, his name would have had a prominent place in the martyrology of the Covenant, and his statue would have occupied a conspicuous niche in the temple of "civil and religious liberty." But before the historians of the Whigs took up their pens, he had revised his political creed, and had no part in their panegyrics. Nay, rather, it was most convenient that, by "turning Jacobite most senselessly," when Jacobitism was at a discount, he should so opportunely have provided a scapegoat to bear into the wilderness the errors, the violence, and the miscarriages that had marked the course of the Whig party, from the merciless faction of the Popish Plot, through the retribution that followed, down to the hour when a coalition of parties and foreign force, guided and controlled by one great mind of singular grasp and calm, secured alike victory and moderation in its use.

CHAPTER XIII.

1685-1688.

THE REVOLUTION.

ONCE more an exile, Ferguson found refuge for the third and last time in Holland. To what his attention was chiefly given during the three years that intervened between the western rebellion and the Revolution does not appear,¹ but it was probably about this time that he composed his narrative of the Rye-House Plot. As the conflict again thickened, and the action of William of Orange loomed nearer, he again wielded the weapons of controversy.

The failure and death of Monmouth had removed one

¹ Among the papers of G. E. Frere, Esq., Roydon Hall, Norfolk, reported on by the H. M. Commission, there are letters of 1685 to and from Robert, Earl of Yarmouth. One paper contains the following: "Remarks of what Miss Langford tells me of affairs in Holland. Ferguson, Sir Pacent Wards, and all these conventeetels people due now pray for the marter's wife and hur children: and say the Duke of Monmouth was a marter for his religion, and that his sons are the rit ayres to the Crowne, and that Munmouth party is very great and many in Amsterdam. The Prince is a ridged Presbyterian, and hath been very kind to Munmouth party."

Sir Harry Verney's papers contain an allusion, which shows how anxious the Government were still believed to be to secure Ferguson. On August 10, 1687, W. Denton wrote to Sir Ralph Verney: "Sir Charles Gaudrey coming to town overtook a coach and eight horses, glasses up, and well blunderbussed on both sides: asked if he might ask without offence who was in, they told him they could not tell, only it was a traitor from beyond sea, and that they came from Harwich, but I hear no more of it." On 17th August he wrote again: "Who was in the coach with eight horses I can not learn; only the parson who was in the company was bolder than Sir Charles, and rode often up to the coach side, whose glasses were sometimes down to let in the air, and he confidently said it was Ferguson: if he, I guess he'll peach to save his own life." On 31st August the same correspondent sent another curious *canard*: "Brandon Gerard hath his pardon, and I hear that Pen is getting Ferguson and Mathews' pardons, which it's said will be granted."

great obstacle to the ambition of William of Orange, and the cruelties with which the western insurrection was visited by Kirke and Jeffreys produced a rapid and violent reaction in Great Britain. As the policy of King James disclosed itself, it was viewed with as great disfavour by the Tory party, by the Cavalier country gentlemen, and by the Church, as by the remains of the Whig faction. When the Declaration of Indulgence was promulgated in April 1687, an attempt was made from the English Court to commit the Prince of Orange to its approval. A letter composed by Stewart, the writer of Argyle's declaration, who had at this stage of his career temporarily espoused the cause of James, was addressed to Pensionary Fagel. It produced a reply which is one of the most sagacious and successful of State papers. While asserting that William and Mary would willingly see the abolition of laws prescribing punishment for religious opinions, Fagel drew a distinction between punishments and disabilities, and declared that to remove the latter would be neither for the interest of England nor of the Roman Catholics themselves. The Pensionary's letter was widely circulated in England, and had an important influence on the course of events. Among those who took part in the discussion it provoked was Robert Ferguson, for in his list of his own writings there is found, "A Vindication of Mons^r Fagel's Letter." Archdeacon Eachard says that Fagel's reply was followed "soon after by a very notable piece called 'Reflections on Mons. Fagel's letter,' which still more roused and warmed the hearts of the nation. It was written by a very extraordinary hand, and some things in it very animating, and almost prophetic. Speaking of the inviolable integrity of the Prince and Princess of Orange, he says: 'Our judges have declared that Prince's can dispense with the obligation of laws, but they have not yet given their opinion that they can dispense with the honour of their word; nor

have their Highnesses any confessor to supply such an omission.' Then, to comfort those that are a little desponding, he tells them: 'A Revolution will come with a witness; and it's like it may come before the Prince of Wales be of age to manage an unruly spirit that I fear will accompany it. For my own part, tho' I am neither young nor strong, I hope to live to see a day of Jubilee in England for all that deserve it, when honest men shall have the same pleasure in thinking on these times, that a woman happily delivered hath in reflecting on the pain and danger she was in.'" The historian is not wrong in describing the reflections as remarkable; for the paper, which was dated Jan. 12, 1688, is written with skill and force, and was well suited to the temper of the time.

"Ferguson," says Sir Walter Scott, "did not fail to take a share in the intrigues which preceded the Revolution. He managed the Dissenters for the Prince of Orange, and endeavoured to press upon William a sense of their importance." He specially exerted himself to counteract the influence upon a certain section of the Dissenters of the overtures made to them by King James, when pursuing the policy of humouring them, in order to weaken the Church of England and forward his designs on behalf of the Romanists. But Ferguson did not confine his attention to the Nonconformists, for he was also the author of "An Answer to Mr. Penn's Advice to the Church of England." His entering the lists with the patriarch of the Quakers, and the venerated founder of Pennsylvania, is not the least interesting of the strange varieties and encounters of his chequered career. But his principal attention seems to have been given to keeping the Dissenters straight. To them mainly was addressed a long pamphlet headed, "A Representation of threatening dangers impending over Protestants in Great Britain before the coming of His Highness the Prince of Orange." It was presumably in great part written before Ferguson left

Holland, and either was not published till after the Revolution, or more probably was republished then, as it bears the imprint of 1689. It is couched in his usual style, showing the turns of expression which were characteristic, and breathing his spirit of hostility to Rome. It sets out by sketching the designs of the Papists in Europe generally, and in England in particular—designs which must be much advanced by having a Romanist on that throne, “where such sometimes used to sit as were the terror of Rome, the safeguard of the Reformed religion, and the sanctuary of oppressed Protestants.” He refers to the persecutions in Hungary, France, and Piedmont, occurring under sovereigns of dispositions so different that they can only be ascribed to the same malignant influence, and argues that, acting under it, the King of Britain is not unlikely to follow the example of “the French leviathan,” and “employ dragoons for missionaries.”

“I am not ignorant,” he says, “with what candour we ought by the rules of charity and good manners to speak of all men, whatsoever their religion is: nor am I unacquainted with what veneration and deference we are to discourse of crowned heads; but as I dare not give these flattering titles unto any, of which there are not a few in some of the late addresses presented to the King by an inconsiderate and foolish sort of Dissenting preachers, so I should not know to be accountable to God, my own conscience, or the world, should I not in my station as a Protestant, and as a lover of the laws and liberties of my country, offer something whereby both to undeceive that weak and short-sighted people, whom their own being accommodated for a season by the Declaration of Indulgence hath deluded into an opinion that His Majesty cherished no thoughts of subverting our religion, and also further to enlighten and confirm others in the just apprehensions they are possessed with of the design carrying on in Great Britain and Ireland for the extirpation of Pro-

testancy, and that the late declaration for liberty of conscience is emitted in subserviency thereunto, and calculated by the Court towards the preparing and paving the way for the more facile accomplishment of it." He then resorts to the usual examples from history, and animadverts at length on the policy of King James. It is interesting to note that he particularly comments upon the prosecution of Burnet, whom he praises, while indicating that the charges against him were trumped up, and speaking of him in a way which might bear a double interpretation: "For as to all whereof he is accused in the criminal letters against him bearing date the 19th of April 1687, I myself am both able to assert his innocence and dare assure the world, that none of the persons with whom he is charged to have conspired against the King would have been so far void of discretion (knowing his principles) as to have transacted with him in matters of that kind." ¹

Discussing the chances of success for the attempt contemplated by James, he enters upon a comparison of the circumstances of the time with those of Queen Mary of England, and dwells at some length on the situation of the States of Holland; while, referring to the flattering addresses which had been presented, he curiously enough uses the striking expression and solemn words which rose to the lips of William of Orange as he rode into London amid the rapturous welcomes of the populace: "The throne that is sustained upon the pillars of law and justice need not to hew out unto itself other supporters, nor lean upon the crooked and weak stilts of the insignificant and, for the most part, deceitful as well as bribed vows of a sort of men who will be as ready upon the least disgust to cry *Crucify* to-morrow, as they were, for being gratified (it may be in their lusts,

¹ Burnet had been charged with holding correspondence with "Robert Ferguson," says Oldmixon, "chaplain to the late Earl of Shaftesbury; but it is an impudent falsehood, for he was never Shaftesbury's chaplain, the Earl being no Dissenter and Ferguson a Cameronian."

humours, and revenges, and at best in some separate concern), to cry *Hosanna*." He touches in an amusing and sarcastic manner, on the way in which the royal blandishments had been received by some of the Puritans: "The old strain of zealous preaching against the idolatry of Rome, and concerning the 'coming out of Babylon, my people,' are grown out of fashion with them in England, and are only reserved and laid by to recommend them to the kindness and acceptation of foreign Protestants, when their occasions and conveniences draw them over to Amsterdam." And he concludes thus: "But as the love I bear unto them, and the persuasion and belief I have of the truth of their religious principles, make me exceeding solicitous to have them kept and prevented from being hurried and transported into so fatal and criminal a behaviour, so I desire to make no other excuse for my plain dealing towards them but that of Solomon, who tells us that 'faithful are the words of a friend, while the kisses of an enemy are deceitful,' and that 'he who rebukes a man shall find more favour afterwards than he who flattereth with the tongue.'"

Whether or not the composition of this lengthened treatise had filled the hours of exile, and the title was afterwards adjusted, Ferguson must have watched with ardent anxiety and increasing hope the aspect of political affairs. In England the people grew as discontented as the King was dogged, and the excitement culminated on the acquittal of the Seven Bishops. William, seeing that his time was come, had exclaimed to Dykvelt, "*Aut nunc aut nunquam*," and the workshops and dockyards of Holland rang with preparation. For William, indeed, the whole outlook had been changed by the birth of the Prince of Wales. The fruit could not now fall into his hand; it must be rudely plucked. It has been argued that the real and true motive of the Revolution was financial pressure; that only the

resources of the British monarchy, developed by the system of Dutch finance, could supply the credit necessary for the great schemes of hostility to France which were the grand object in life of William of Orange. It is certain that if, in his English expedition, William were striking a blow for Great Britain, he was striking three for Holland, and that the "blessed deliverance" was one of the moves in a much larger game. Whether the financial support of England was necessary or not, her political alliance was all-important, and so long as Mary of Orange had remained the nearest heir of the throne of the Stuarts, the coalition of the two States might have been any day an accomplished fact, without negotiation or warfare. But the little child in the cot at St. James's had changed all that; had called into active play the most inexorable passions of the human heart, and made the balance of power in Europe a burning question.

On the 19th of October 1688, the Dutch fleet put to sea. On board the frigate which carried William were many of his own Dutchmen; "in the other ships were many of the nobility and gentry of England and Scotland, who had already declared for the Prince, of which the chief were the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Earl of Macclesfield, Viscount Mordant, the Earl of Argyle"—son of him whose head had succeeded his father's on the Tolbooth of Edinburgh—"the Lord Wiltshire, the Lord Paulet, the Lord Elan, son to the Marquis of Halifax, and the Lord Dumblaine, son to the Earl of Danby, Admiral Herbert, Mr. Henry Herbert, Colonel Sidney, Mr. Russel"—brother and cousin of those whose heads had fallen for the Rye Plot—"Sir Rowland Gwyn, Major Wildman, Dr. Burnet, Mr. Harbord, Mr. Ferguson, and many others." The prints of the day tell us that the enterprise of William was shared in by "some loyal Rye-House and Sedgmore men, true disciples of honest old

Rumbold and Robin Ferguson ;” and an extract from Mr. Pepy’s MS., in Carte’s Book in the Stuart Papers, dated 30th October 1688, quaintly expresses the general migration : “ Burnet is embarked. Stuart, Ferguson, and Wildman are embarked with Lord Macclesfield. All the rebels of the old and new stamp go along.” On 14th December 1688, the Marquis d’Abbeville wrote to Lord Preston from The Hague : “ Here are printed in Dutch, but first in English, by Ferguson, Burnet, Wildman and Ferguson, forty or fifty articles against the King ; this they left to be printed here in case of success.” Ferguson had been one of those specially excepted in the pardon published by King James on 2nd October.

Though scattered at first by a storm, and obliged to put back to the Dutch harbours, the mighty armament was soon again under weigh, and as it passed the straits, so extended was its line, spreading to within a league of either shore, that it saluted the fortresses of Dover and Calais at the same time. How great Ferguson must have felt the contrast to have been to the former occasion, when he had passed the same white cliffs on a similar errand. Then the *Heldererbergh*, and her two small tenders, had carried a band of eighty desperate men to a gambler’s cast : in addition to the British exiles and the Dutch auxiliaries, the fleet of William bore the famous Maréchal Schomberg, the son of Rouvigny, and more than 200 French officers, who had left their country for their religion. As his eye wandered along the clouds of swelling canvas, and he reflected on the varied interests represented in the expedition, he might think with a touch of satire on the suggestive conversation with Monmouth on the same waters three years before ; and the memory of the blue flag that had been raised for the Protestant religion, only to fall in shame and blood, would rise as his glance penetrated through the forest of masts to

where the great standard floated out over the main body of the fleet, bearing the English colours and the arms of Orange and Stuart, encircled with the words "The Protestant Religion and Liberties of England," and, underneath, the motto of the house of Nassau, "*Je maintiendrai.*" As the fleet drew up in Torbay, on the afternoon of the 5th of November, "a certain chaplain on board the *Golden Sun*, from the top of the uppermost cabin, flourished a Bible, and, with a voice loud enough to be heard by the people, cried out, "For the Protestant Religion and maintaining the Gospel in truth and purity, we are all, by the goodness and Providence of God, come hither, after so many storms and tempests. Moreover," continued he, "it is the Prince of Orange that is come—a zealous defender of that faith which is truly ancient, catholic and apostolical, who is the supreme governor of this great and formidable fleet." The first troops to land were Mackay's British division of three English and three Scots regiments, in one of which Ferguson's brother, James, then held the rank of Captain, his commission as such bearing the date of the preceding April. It was one of the very few occasions in the Plotter's life when he found father or brother on the same side as himself, and, though now they stood arrayed under the same banners, it would be difficult to find two careers of active men issuing from the same household more unlike than those of the two Aberdeenshire brothers who now disembarked on English soil as followers of the Prince of Orange. The one was to take part in nearly every great action of his time in which the British troops were engaged, and, doing his duty straightforwardly and well, to win the fair rewards of honest military service; the other, rightly or wrongly, was to turn his back upon his former career, to mix again in every tortuous intrigue, and apparently to rely in the end on the kindness of his relatives for the ordinary comforts of life.

But at present the chances seemed very different. Before long the army moved forward, and in a day or two a triumphal entry was made into the city of Exeter, where Ferguson was the actor in a singular incident. Burnet was officiating before the Prince of Orange in the Cathedral, and he was determined to preach in the Presbyterian meeting-house in St. James' Street. The minister and elders, however, would not consent, locked the doors, and refused him the keys. "In that case," he exclaimed, "I will take the kingdom of heaven by violence," and, sending for a hammer, broke open the door. He ascended the pulpit sword in hand, and preached from the sixteenth verse of the ninety-fourth Psalm, "Who will rise up for me against evildoers?" An unfriendly observer remarked that, "even the old presbyter himself could not away with the breath of brother Ferguson in his diocess," and added, "I heard one of that gang say that his discourse came very much under the lash of the twenty-five of Edward the Third; he is not much regarded by any of the Prince's retinue." As is ever the case, the rewards of success were in great measure to be reaped by others than those who had laboured in the burden and heat of the day. It was wise policy for William to disassociate himself from men whose names were connected with the failures of his predecessors, and Monmouth's supporters ought to have been buried with him. The popular notions of the Rye Plot, the miscarriage of the Duke's attempt on the Crown, had left a stigma on him who was supposed to be the mainspring of these endeavours, and the business of the Dutchman at the moment was to conciliate as many of his opponents as possible. Ferguson would seem to have been of too independent a mind to be made a tool, and to have lacked the qualities which were Burnet's stepping-stones to influence and preferment. But his past services to the Whigs, and the perils he had under-

gone merited a much more signal recognition than they ultimately received. His pen indeed was used in the interest of William with all its former power, and somewhat more than its former prudence.

The expedition moved on towards the capital, and, though crowds did not flock to aid, as was the case when Monmouth appeared, men gathered to stare at the well-mounted gentlemen with their negro servants, the Swedish horsemen and the Swiss foot, the train of artillery, and the English, Scottish, French, and Dutch soldiery, who made up the motley but formidable array. The treachery of Cornbury was followed by the black perfidy of Churchill; a company of Scots scattered a body of Sarsfield's Irishmen, and the royal army melted away on Salisbury Plain. The *canards* skilfully floated by unscrupulous partisans did their work, and the delusions of the populace more than answered the desires of the managers. Before long, Dutch soldiers had replaced the English Guards at Whitehall and St. James's, the King was a fugitive beyond sea, and the destruction of a Government had to be followed by the harder work of replacing it. In these circumstances Ferguson again gave voice to the prevailing spirit of the moment in a pamphlet headed, "The Justification of the Prince of Orange his descent; and for settling the Crown upon him on the foot that King James had Abdicated."¹ It was written with more moderation than most of his political productions, and is so full of matter that it is almost impossible to reproduce the lines of its argument within reasonable limits. It is replete with constitutional lore, enthusiastic in the characters it draws of the Prince and Princess of Orange, and advocates the exact line of action which the Houses adopted.

A change was at hand which invests his pamphlet with more than ordinary interest, for it was the last of the public

¹ *Vide* Appendix.

exertions made by its author in the ranks of the Whig party. In itself it repays attention, for it is one of the best of his literary efforts, eminently suited to the moment, and remarkable for its forecast of the policy that was pursued. It states the case for the Revolution temperately, yet strongly, and pronounces on the great problem of the time with more than a mere intriguer, fanatic, or pamphleteer's grasp of the situation. It seizes with a firm hand on the weapon most fitted cleanly to cut the Gordian Knot, and advocates the policy of a statesman who sees far more than what lies immediately around him. It is no mean work of art, for there is little superfluity of argument; everything is built up to the practical conclusion, and the tower, once fitted with its crown, is buttressed and defended. It is instinct with the spirit of the Revolution of 1688—that spirit which made Burke say it was a revolution prevented rather than a revolution effected, and inspired him to describe British freedom as “a freedom signed, sealed, and delivered.” It is difficult to believe that such a State paper, for so it might be called, came in a short time from the pen of the pulpiteer of Exeter, and yet this is only one of the contradictions that perplex us in Ferguson the Plotter. It must have had a considerable influence on the formation of public opinion, and the proceedings of the Convention, for its author was one who knew well how to make his voice reach the ears it was intended to penetrate.

In the list which Ferguson drew up of his works twenty years afterwards, classifying them into those of which he repented, and those written since his conversion to a sounder political creed, this Justification appears as the last that has a place in the former class. Whatever may have been the reason, the new Government was scarcely established, and “the Plotter” settled in a comfortable office, when he hauled down his Whig flag and hoisted Jacobite colours, displaying

as much energy in plotting against the new Government as he had done in subverting the old one. The real reason of the change, and its immediate occasion, it is impossible to fathom. He did not change alone, and some of his old associates worked with him still. But they were soon a defeated party, and their motives and aims are buried under misfortune and obloquy. The sentiments of some were disgraceful in the extreme; but a Government that is the offspring of revolution cannot expect the loyalty and fidelity that it has overthrown. The spirits that it has invoked will not cease to trouble because others have obtained high place, and when the institutions of a realm are in the crucible, the morality of public men becomes a very different thing from what it is in times of contentment and quiet progress. To Wodrow Ferguson's action was inexplicable. He remarks that he "wrote many sharp and bitter papers against King James, yet after the Revolution turned Jacobite most senselessly." "The fancies," adds the minister of Eastwood, "came in his head, few can account for; but he turned so openly Jacobite that his place was taken from him." Oldmixon is ready, as usual, with a suggested motive and explanation of the baser sort, for he accounts for Fletcher of Salton's subsequent action in the Scottish Parliament as due to his "being disgusted because he had not the place he had cut out for himself, as Ferguson was, because he was not Secretary of State." But Oldmixon was not very accurate in describing the Plotter as a Cameronian, and, being the most violent of partisans, would believe anything of one who had been so wicked and so foolish as to desert or to doubt the infallibility of the triumphant Whigs. In the "Revolution Politicks, a Collection of Reports, Lyes, and Stories, True and False," which were floating about at that excited and eventful time, there is an entry under date February 14th, 1689, that suggests an

explanation of Ferguson's discontent which is quite discredited, not only by the title and argument of his last pamphlet, but by the whole tenor of his political opinions either as a Whig or Tory: "Twas further reported that when the Prince of Orange had accepted the crown, and was proclaimed King, several people were much surprised at it, but especially one Mr. Ferguson, a Dissenting minister. He impudently told the Prince of Orange to his face that there was no trust to be given to kings and princes. He said that when the Prince was in Holland he promised he would be only Protector of the Commonwealth of England, and not King."

After the Revolution was accomplished, King William gave him, in Wodrow's words, "a place King Charles had just made for Thomas Killigrew, a keeper of a house, I think, for the custom office, where he had nothing to do but to keep the rooms clean, and set chairs for the commissioners when they meet, and for this he had £500 a year." "He now enjoyed," says Dalrymple, "a place under King William, but not suited as he thought to his services and dangers." Luttrell notes that, on the 11th of May 1689, "Ferguson, the fanatic parson, came into the Court of King's Bench, and reversed his two outlawries upon him for high treason," and in the Act of the Scottish Parliament rescinding the "forfaulures and fynes since the year 1665," there occurs in the list of those benefited by it the name of "Mr. Robert Fergusone, some tyme chaplaine to the Earl of Shaftesberrie." It is possible that an entry in the Leven and Melville papers preserves his address in June 1689; for a letter was directed by Sir George Mackenzie to Mr. James Melville "at Mr. Ferguson's in Suffolk St." Probably the first public indication of the change in his sentiments, that was taking place in view of the very altered aspect of events, was given by the appearance of a broadsheet,

printed at London and reprinted at Edinburgh in 1689, which is so curious and unique that it must be given in full. It is as follows :—

“ R. FERGUSON'S
APOLOGY

For his Transactions the last ten years, both in England
and Foreign Parts.

“ Since through prejudice, misapprehension, or other weakness, sometimes or other the fate of all mankind, I have incurred the censure of many: 'tis but reason I should let them know that my more enlightened understanding has sufficiently convinced me of my over-hasty and prejudicial censure of the *Discipline of the Church of England*, as it stands now by law established: and since of late, by many worthy champions for the *Protestant Religion*, the *Church of England* has been sufficiently vindicated from the least aspersion her malicious adversaries the Romanists, especially the priests, could against her reputation suggest: so I myself (for some time past) have not to my poor ability been wanting in my care and endeavours to support her honours and credit, and free her from the least imputation of ill whatsoever; and though my misfortune meeting with an unhappy juncture of time may have rendered me obnoxious to the censure of some good men, yet since the effects of these designs which *England* has, by sad experience, seen levelled against even the foundation of the *Protestant Interest*, have been both publick and answerable to the conjectures of every wise man that at that time took any observation of them, I have no reason to despair now at last of reconciling myself again to their good opinion; and truly, though I am sufficiently satisfied of my error (or my crime) in adhering to a party or person (whose title to the office he then took upon him was every way questionable),

yet they that will without prejudice consider the great dangers at that time threatening the *Protestant Churches* and state of this kingdom will, I believe, be easily induced to lay aside all animosities conceived against me, and conclude that I rather mistook the manner and method of curing, than that I was anyways ignorant of the malignity of the distemper: However, His Royal Highness the *Prince of Orange* has already dissipated all our fears as to this point, who as he seems by a peculiar providence to have been marked out for the work he has now undertaken, so besides the justice of his claim to the *Protection of our Religion and Laws*, has by all the actions of his life demonstrated that pity and piety, religion and justice, more than any other consideration whatsoever, has prompted him to this glorious undertaking: and though the glory of the best and greatest action in the world, like the sun, may meet with some cloudy obstruction and interpretation in the hearts of some few prejudiced, I will not say ignorant, men, yet the general joy that has and yet fills the hearts of the nobility and commons of these kingdoms does evidently demonstrate that His Royal Highness's proceedings before, and since, his arrival tend to no other thing, nor the least point deviate from fulfilling the utmost expectation and desires of this nation. We are not now (having by woful experience bought out our knowledge) ignorant of the crafty devices and arts of the Romish priests to divide and disturb the hearts of the people of *England*, by insinuating and suggesting to them His Royal Highness's inclination to alter or restrain any part of the service of the Church of *England* as by *Law* established: but as the objection to any that have the honour to know the Prince is frivolous and groundless, so a very little time will repose those false dreamers, to the unavoidable necessity of being found in a lye; and though it has been the opinion of many pious and zealous

assertors of the interest of the Church of *England* as it now stands established, that, with all submission, some regulations in the Divine Service might be offered for the better accommodating and uniting some small differences which by the malicious fomentations of our common adversaries have proved fatal to this nation, yet it has ever been His Royal Highness's resolution to leave them to the open consideration and final determination of a free Parliament; 'tis rather likely than impossible that this innocent though heart's vindication of myself (for he must be overgrown with prejudice that can misdoubt the rest) may meet with a reception very unsuitable to the design it is writ with, for such is our vitious nature, that we much rather strive to lash past miscarriages than encourage good resolutions, and as I can appeal to the natural, and consequently necessary infirmities of all which nature, for favour, if not pardon, for my past errors: so my experience of the fatigue and vanity of all worldly business, with the assistance of God, which I heartily pray for, has reduced me to fix my resolution of setting myself *apart*, wholly for the service of God, before whose altar I shall, by His grace, endeavour to present myself an holy, pure, and unspotted sacrifice for ever."

This Apology does not appear in his own list of his works, but, if it is genuine, would seem to throw some light on the psychological process which transformed him from a violent Whig and sectary into a hot Jacobite and Non-Juror. It was evidently written before the Prince of Orange became King William, and shows just at the turn of his opinions the same apprehension and aversion to Popery which he had formerly displayed, and which did not forsake him in later years. The communings between King James and some of the Nonconformists, which had called forth the

"Representation," very probably changed to a more critical one the frame of mind in which he had hitherto regarded their principles; while the resolute stand made by the Church of England for the Protestant interest had certainly disposed him more favourably towards the Establishment. Adhesion to Episcopacy in such circumstances and in that age was more natural in an Aberdeenshire Scot than in a native of any other part of the northern kingdom; and probably Ferguson was only returning to the faith in a modified form of which he had been brought up, and which was professed by most of his relatives at the time. Be that as it may, in that stirring and critical time many opinions were recast, and many new lights thrown upon previously conceived notions. The Revolution turned out very differently from what many who were most eager in it expected, and to some it seemed as if they had just made an exchange of one master for another. To others there was a stumbling-block in the granting of that very toleration to the Romanists which had been the aim of King James's indulgence, and disappointed fervour is apt to rush to the other extreme. Robert Ferguson was not one who could play the part of a neutral, or stand aloof from the strife; and, despite his sense of "the fatigue and vanity of all worldly business," the *perfervidum ingenium* of his nature was too much for his resolution, and he was soon again illustrating the accuracy of his own prognostication in the days of the Stuarts, that "he would never be out of a plot as long as he lived." Whether his action was right or wrong, wise or senseless, that it was sincere is perhaps best evidenced by the fact that, when he changed, he changed to the losing side. The cause of his new allies he took up in the same "enthusiastic way" in which he had formerly acted, and he brought to them a shrewdness and experience which they much needed.

The zeal he exhibited is referred to in an epigram of the day:—

“Some truths are doubted ; this by none is alighted,
There’s no such fiend as Ferguson Jacobited.”

And it was not long before the Jacobites had occasion both for his pen and his talent for conspiracy.

CHAPTER XIV.

1689-1690.

THE MONTGOMERY PLOT.

IN carrying through the Revolution in Scotland, and securing the throne for the Prince of Orange, no one had been more active than Sir James Montgomery of Skelmorlie. He had been instrumental in intercepting the correspondence between King James and his adherents north of the Border, and was one of the commissioners sent up to London to offer the crown to William. But when that offer was accepted, to Montgomery's disgust, the office of Secretary of State was given, not to him, but to Lord Melville. He was only one of many dissatisfied men, who, disappointed in their ambition, threw themselves into opposition; and during the session of 1689, "The Club," as the large following was called which soon collected around him and his confederates, the Earl of Annandale and Lord Ross, commanded a majority in Parliament, and met the measures of the Government with fierce hostility. Various indeed were the fortunes of the old associates of the Rye-House Plot; for, while Lord Melville held office, Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth was one of the most violent of the Opposition, and James Stewart adhered to the Club. Sir James Montgomery was an old acquaintance of Ferguson, who, according to Tindal, had "returned to his old habit of disturbing the Government." During the first session of the Parliament, into which the Scotch Convention had been metamorphosed, the Jacobites

held aloof, while the discontented majority attacked the royal prerogative and the King's Ministers, and refused to be diverted from their purpose by the suggested settlement of the Church, drawing from Sir John Dalrymple the remark that they preferred the destruction of the State to the settlement of the Church. On the 2d of August the King summarily put an end to the session, and six Acts which had been passed were refused the royal assent. This still more irritated the malcontents.

An interesting original letter, signed by Sir James Montgomery, and preserved among the State papers, addressed to Ferguson, gives a glance into circumstances which were soon to eventuate in disturbance to many and distress to some. It is dated 20th August 1689, was written from Edinburgh, and in it Montgomery informs Ferguson that the Parliament is dissolved, and a proclamation issued commanding all Privy Councillors and officers in the army to stay in Scotland, thus preventing any account of affairs there reaching the King, "except through some persons." After referring to his share in the Revolution, he says he has written a letter to King William asking for an interview, "that I may without reserve let him know truelie and without disguise the postures of affairs here." "I have," he continues, "written to the King to that effect, desiring libertie to come up. You have the letter here enclosed. I know no Scotchman to transport it to about Court to deliver it. They are banded against us. I have no acquaintance amongst the English, and so I have committed it to you to take youre own way, and to put it in whose hands you please to deliver it. The letter contains nothing but a short vindication of our proceedings, and a desire to allow me to come up. You have dexteritie enough to manage this, you have affection enough to your country and to the King's service to make you undertake it, and you have good and

great acquaintances enough whereby to effectuate it. I doe again recommend it to you, with all my heart, and beg you may bestow yourself in it, and let me have your return as soon as possible." Shortly afterwards a public step was taken. Montgomery and some of his friends found their way to London in spite of the proclamation, as in the letter he had suggested, and on the 15th of October they presented to the King a humble representation from the majority of the Lords and Commissioners of Shires and Burghs, referring to the fact that the objectionable Acts had not been touched with the sceptre, and complaining bitterly of the Government.

This representation was received with great disfavour at Court, and still more wrath was aroused by a pamphlet enforcing it, entitled "The late Proceedings and Votes of the Parliament of Scotland, contained in an Address delivered to the King, signed by the plurality of the members thereof, stated and vindicated.—Glasgow, 1689." In reference to this the Earl of Annandale, in his subsequent narrative, says that "After the first adjournment of the Scottish Parliament in 1689, the Earl of Annandale, Lord Ross, Sir James Montgomery of Skelmorlie, came to London contrair to the King's express command, and presented an address to His Majesty, which with a lybel called the Vindication of it (wrytten by Mr. Robert Ferguson, as Sir James told the Earl, who furnished him with the materials), gave such offence to the King as made us quickly see we had totally lost the King's favour." So, if Ferguson, as Tindal says, was "taken in, as a man who naturally loved to embroil things," the step was a very successful one. But it would seem from the narrative given by the Earl of Balcarres, in the Memoirs which he addressed to the exiled King, that even before this Montgomery and his friends had entered into relations with the Jacobites. For, after mentioning that Montgomery had got

acquainted with Ferguson, Neville Payne, and "some others that were then in your service," he relates that Montgomery and Payne, "having concerted all their measures with the consent of Mr. Ferguson and these two Lords, they proposed their resolution of serving your Majesty to the Earl of Arran, then prisoner in the Tower of London, who readily embraced the motion, thinking a reconciliation with the most violent of your enemies might occasion a considerable turn in affairs.

"The next step they made was to send one over to your Majesty with an humble offer of their service and advice how all things should be disposed of. Although they found a messenger very proper for their affair (one Mr. Simson, better known by the name of Jones), yet they found great difficulties how to get their commissions patents and instructions to their Parliament worded according to form, none of them being acquainted with the style of these affairs. Sir William Forrester, your Under Secretary for Scotland, eased them of this pain in giving the forms of all such papers as they desired by Mr. Ferguson, believing it could only be for some design to serve your Majesty, the Earl of Arran being known by him to be concerned in it. After they had despatched their messengers with all his instructions, Sir James and Mr. Ferguson being both declared enemies to Lord Melville, they wrote a pamphlet which they called 'The Scots Grievances,' in which they laid open all their mismanagements at the Court, and all their wicked breach of promises, with all the bitterness of style Mr. Ferguson was capable of, which was not small, being accustomed to such undertakings for many years, but more particularly in the Duke of Monmouth's invasion."

The address had been outspoken in its terms, but the vindication was bolder still. If, as Annandale says, Ferguson was coached by him, through Montgomery, he exhibited great

aptitude in mastering his brief, and a knowledge of Scots affairs which would have been very effective had he secured in the Revolution Parliament the seat which had been held by his father in that of the Restoration. He sets out by declaring that "To remain silent under the aspersions which some busy, but either weak or ill men, are endeavouring to fasten not only upon the proceedings but upon divers of the most honourable and loyal members of Parliament were to be no less treacherous to His Majesty than careless of the reputation of that whole illustrious body." He asserts that the object of the vindication is to give the English nation a true account of the transactions that had occurred; that "the coalition of Scotland with England under one monarch without a Union between the two nations into one Legislative Body and Civil Government" had greatly advanced the late designs of arbitrary power; and that William had laid both under great obligations by inviting them to "a union of strength, Councils, and Legislative Authority." The grievances of Scotland had been largely owing to only one or two persons having the ear of the King at a distance; witness the late Duke of Lauderdale, "who, though he had too much wit and courage to be either hectored or wheedled to be any man's tool and property, yet through lack of probity on the one hand and excess of ambition on the other, he was easily prevailed upon to become an instrument of ruining and enslaving his country." "What may Scotland then dread," asks the writer, "if a person should be honoured with the character and trust of Secretary for that kingdom in whom all the qualifications for so considerable a station were the sighing decently, the entertaining one with a grave nod, or, if you please, a grimace instead of a solid reason: the making those whom he judged Court favourites his unerring oracles; and learning the customs, rights, and laws of his nation from them that never did, nor were obliged to know them: the recommend-

ing those to be Privy Councillors to the King who withstood his being so ;” a person “unskilled in politics,” and “wholly employed how to engross the considerable places of the kingdom for enriching his family” ? Such is his tone towards Lord Melville : he treats in a very different strain the Dalrymples, who had secured their full share of high place, both before and after the Revolution. He points out that William, “having charged the late King’s evil counsellors, and them only, with the crimes upon which he grounded both the righteousness and necessity of his expedition, whosoever is so villainous as to advise him to use them can design no less than deriving an aspersion upon his wisdom, justice, and sincerity.” “And,” he asks, with the air of a man who is somewhat puzzled himself, and in language which perhaps reveals much of the process going on in his own mind, “if the nations be not delivered from those against whom he declared, how shall we be able to answer his enemies, who accuse his coming hither to have been upon another motive ? For what his friends affirm to have been bestowed upon him as the reward only of his expedition, and of the deliverance which he wrought out for us, his adversaries will be encouraged both to believe and say was the principal if not the sole end of it. . . . It is impossible to keep up in the minds of the vulgar, honourable thoughts of King William’s Government if he will chuse to work with King James’s tools. Whosoever counsels His Majesty to employ those that were the instruments of the former tyranny must intend to bring him under a suspicion both of approving that and of designing the like. No man envieth His Majesty’s pardoning the worst of his and the kingdom’s enemies ; but we cannot avoid pitying him and bewailing ourselves that he is persuaded to use them. . . . And tho’, through the moderation, goodness, and justice of their Majesties, we may escape the consequences of such a method during their reign (which I pray

God, may be long), yet posterity will lose most of the benefit of this Revolution." There is not a little in the reverent audacity of these allusions to William that recalls the tone in which King Charles had been treated ten years before, and, nominally referring to Scotland, the observations were undoubtedly intended to apply to England also. But the attack on Stair and his son was not confined to generalities. His military career under the Covenanters was compared with his "quality of a civil officer under Charles II." His legal judgments were described as "more ambiguous than Delphic oracles;" he had been "the principal Minister of all L——s arbitrariness and King Charles's usurpations"; and, as an aggravation, all had been done under the "veil of religion." He is dismissed with a dark reference to the prophecy of ill which Mr. R. Douglas had foretold against his house, and the first-fruits of it which had been already tasted. So straight went this shaft to its mark that it produced "An Apology for Sir James Dalrymple of Stair, President of the Session, by himself." The venerated embodiment of Scottish Law gives, according to Dr. John Hill Burton, "with his usual power of accurate analysis, an abridgment of the charges against him." But the learned historian does not observe that Stair's abridgment of the accusations against him is almost in words identical with the graphic picture sketched by Ferguson in this short passage of the Vindication of the Scots Address. In one remarkable particular, the accused inverts the order of his sins, and, apparently less touched by the reference to the tragedy that furnished Scott with the outlines of the "Bride of Lammermuir," reserves to the last, as the climax of all, the imputation "that the decisions of the Lords of Session which I have published are as obscure as the oracles of Delphos."

Of Sir John Dalrymple, it is asserted that "his capacity both as lawyer and His Majesty's Advocate hath not served

to instruct him of the danger, nor to restrain him from leasing making, which is treason by the law of Scotland." The Parliament, it is hoped, will inflict on him the punishment due to those who traduce dutiful subjects to their King. The principle on which he acts is declared to be "That the King hath a separate interest from his people," which has so alarmed Scotland, that his removal from office can alone allay the apprehension.

The King is plainly reminded that the cause to which he owed his throne was the "invasions of the late Government," and the promises of the Declaration at The Hague are quoted. The failure to fulfil them is laid at the door of the Ministers, and the address is described as "only an endeavour to maintain the justice of the King's undertaking in coming to deliver us." Ferguson takes up the votes which roused the Royal displeasure, and vindicates each in turn. And, indeed, the remonstrants had *prima facie* a very good case. In the circumstances of Scotland, with Claverhouse hanging on the hills and invasion impending from the coast of Ulster, there was much to be said for the non-employment of those who had held high place under the Stuarts. The vote concerning Committees of Parliament might be justified by the previous conduct of that close corporation, the Lords of the Articles, and Ferguson deals in much ancient history to show how the abuse had grown up. The character of the bench gave considerable show of reason to the demand for the nomination of the Lords of Session, and, in the circumstances of the moment, the position of the Ministers was not constitutionally impregnable. Again we have a learned treatise on the part of the judicial office and a clever polemical treatment of the questions at issue, especially with reference to the appointment of the President. But, writing for English readers, the author wisely leaves unvindicated the Act abolishing the Royal Supremacy in causes ecclesiastical, and the

Act for restoring the "outed" ministers of 1661. He passes from particular grievances to three general reflections. The first is, that to make a people happy they must not only have a good King but good Ministers. "And Machiavel's observation that a wise King will always find wise Ministers is no more than what every man is persuaded of upon the first principles of reason and of common sense." The King might have been misled in the choice of his officers at first coming over, but to continue in using his present ones would leave an imputation not only on his goodness but his wisdom. "It was a severe prediction as well as observation which the late Prince of Condé made upon the news of King Charles Second's death and of his brother's succeeding him, That he was like to be well served through having none about him but his own fools and his predecessor's knaves." There follows another contemptuous allusion to Lord Melville as "but a puny in the politicks."

The second reflection is that "one illegal step doth lead to many, nor is one arbitrary thing to be supported but by another." In opening the Signet, when the Parliament had stopped it, the Council had impugned the dignity and authority of Parliament, and this was treason. They had also concussed the gentlemen of the long robe who had been appointed to the bench, to take their seats contrary to their own judgment, and they had forcibly supported what they had unjustly begun with the forces of the Crown that should have been employed against Cannon and his Highlanders.

And the third and supreme position was, that the King should make some alteration of his Ministers. "It is evident that he is betrayed, nor is it difficult to know by whom or how. For things speak when men either will not or dare not. . . . They who advise him to be King only of a party, and not of the whole people, have a mind that he should be King of none. . . . If he will but own himself

and assert his own interest, he will have enough of those to stand by him who have no interest but what is his."

Such was the famous Vindication of the Scots address, a document that seriously disturbed William's Dutch calm, and marked the first flow of reaction after the Revolution. The treachery which Montgomery, Annandale, and Ross displayed to each other soon afterwards has covered their names with obloquy, but there is something to be urged on behalf of the position they now took up. Granted that it was purely personal ambition that animated them, were the statesmen they sought to displace governed by higher motives? Granted that it was treachery for them to proceed further, and enter into a league with the Jacobites, were the leading men among their contemporaries free from the same stain? The treachery of disappointed men, backed by an enthusiastic majority in Parliament, was nothing to the base betrayal, the coolly planned and relentless treachery which had opened the road for William to London; and could he who had driven his father-in-law from his throne, who had appealed to discontent and revolution, look for the same fidelity that he had upset, on the morrow of a successful *coup d'état*? He was there as the King of the aggrieved; and if grievances were neglected, could he be very much surprised if men asked what really the Revolution had been made for? If the leaders of the Whigs could secretly correspond with and invite William over, was the public morality so much worse of those who thought the bargain had been a bad one, and proceeded as secretly to call James back? He was still the King of one of three kingdoms; he had an army holding out in another; and, indeed, north of Tay his cause was the popular one. In England itself his supporters were beginning to stir, and large masses of the Tory party to ask themselves what it was they had done. The new system had not acquired its character of finality, and where, in

revolutions, is consistency and principle the rule? Large numbers of men hung between the different parties and the competing monarchs, and the new royalty had certainly not acquired the sanctity of established rule. Those who had done much to make it might feel themselves fairly justified in unmaking it, if the intended purposes were not served. What Ferguson's exact position in this intrigue was, it is difficult to trace. Whether the tone of loyalty to King William, but of hatred to his Ministers and misgiving as to his policy, which distinguishes the Vindication, evidences a step in the process of personal conversion, or is merely the act of the skilled controversialist, writing for a purpose of his own from the standpoint of allies less advanced, whom he wishes to lead further forward or to utilise, must be matter of conjecture. It is certain that the rejection of the Scots address was followed by a secret alliance between the malcontent statesmen and the partisans of James; that Ferguson was engaged in it, but no substantial evidence ever could be obtained against him; and that towards him in particular William of Orange cherished intentions which were certainly not calculated, if he knew their nature, to check incipient inclinations towards Jacobitism.

The winter of 1689-90 was spent "at London in their private contests and different designs," and when the Scottish Parliament reassembled, the co-operation that had been established between the Club and the Jacobites was illustrated in a manner which clearly shows the hand of Ferguson. General Mackay was then straining every nerve to secure the erection of a fortified post at Inverlochy, to bridle the western Highlands and check communication with the army of King James in Ireland; and, for the command of the detachment which was to commence constructing it, he had selected the Plotter's younger brother, who had accompanied his regiment when it came over with

William of Orange, had served in the Killiecrankie campaign, and was at this time Major of Lauder's Fusiliers. The starting of his little expedition was much delayed, and the intriguers, as soon as the appointment of the commander was known, "essayed," in General Mackay's words, "to debauch Major Ferguson; but the said Major, who is a vigorous and well-affected man, discovered all their proposals, not concealing a letter from a very near relation of his own to the same purpose, whereof the General gave present notice to the commissioner (Lord Melville) and afterwards to the King." The success that attended Major Ferguson's activity in the west, along with Livingston's in the north, ultimately "broke all the measures that had been taken for King James's interest in Scotland;" and the contrast between the efforts and the fortunes of the two brothers did not escape the notice of an historian in whose eyes opposition to the new order was an unpardonable crime. "Major Ferguson," says Oldmixon, "was very successful against the rebels in the Island of Mull, while his brother, that vile apostate from all principles of morality, religion, and liberty, was in the depths of the assassination and invasion plots in England."

In spite of the coalition, the aspect of affairs had considerably changed during the recess, and the Club no longer commanded a majority in Parliament. The establishment of Presbyterianism—not of the Latitudinarian Dutch stamp—had been one of their stipulations with King James. They had been throughout viewed with suspicion by consistent Jacobites like Balcarres, and, with the disappearance of the majority, their influence fell. It was, however, through the English share in the scheme that it received its first serious blow. Montgomery, according to Hume, "had acquired great interest among the Whigs of England," and, through the agency of Payne and Ferguson, that "veteran in the arts of treason," the foundations of a restoration were deeply

laid in the southern kingdom. How far Montgomery's plot was connected with the designs in which the Earls of Clarendon, Aylesbury, and Dartmouth were mixed up, does not clearly appear, but the reaction in England was great. In Worcestershire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire, levies were held, commissions distributed, and men assembled, and a great football match near Newcastle was supposed to cover a Jacobite muster. "It is extremely probable," says Ralph, "that Ferguson had an understanding with the malcontents of England, and that he had engaged for their countenance when time should serve; but then it is as probable that he was restrained from trusting the Scots with the secret of names, and that, upon the whole, there was no other connection between the two parties than arose by his means;" and, referring to Payne and Ferguson, he describes Montgomery as "marching thus far under the banners of a known spy and a professed incendiary."

It was, however, given out that "James would grant a full indemnity, separate himself entirely from the French interest, and be contented with a secret connivance in favour of the Roman Catholics." But at this stage a brother of Montgomery went to Bishop Burnet, and informed him that "a treaty with King James was absolutely concluded, and an invitation subscribed by the whole cabal," which was to be carried to France by an agent named Williamson for transmission to Ireland. Williamson was arrested, but not before the papers had passed from him to another agent, who got safely abroad, and returned with papers and a supply of money for the Scotch conspirators. Though unsuccessful in this seizure, the Government had been put on the alert, but the final collapse of the plot was due to Montgomery himself. He tampered with King James's letters, abstracting certain of them from the box in which they came, and only laying before his fellow-conspirators

what he chose. He was discovered, went, and revealed the plot to Lord Melville. It then became a question of who should tell most and soonest. Ross immediately went up to London, in spite of some talk among his accomplices of waylaying him and cutting his throat, and declared that he had been drawn in, and Montgomery and Ferguson were the real criminals. Tindal mentions that Montgomery at this stage sent Mr. Ferguson to Lord Annandale, who had "been maintained by Mr. Ferguson for several weeks," to assure "him he had discovered nothing, and desiring him to continue firm and secret." Sir Walter Scott says that Annandale was secreted by Ferguson for several weeks, "a kindness which the Marquis repaid by betraying him to the Government." When, however, Ross's confession got wind, Sir James came to London, and had an audience of Queen Mary, who in her husband's absence in Ireland was discharging many of the duties of a ruler, in which he made additional revelations. He had obtained a promise that he would be allowed to depart in safety, and after his audience lived for some weeks in concealment in London, endeavouring to stipulate for a place as the price of further confession. But the King would only go the length of a pardon, and the versatile intriguer finally made his escape to the Continent. Annandale was brought up on a warrant from Bath, whither he had retired, and added considerably to the information in the possession of Government, compromising several people, among whom were the Duke of Queensberry, Lord Athole, and Lord Breadalbane. It is startling to find among those who had been in the intrigue the name of the Earl of Argyle. Annandale's narrative in the Leven and Melville papers, in the Queen's handwriting, mentions Ross as having said that "as for persons here, he could name none but Ferguson, who, he assured me, knew all, and was the chief manager of everything." Sir William Lockhart,

writing to Lord Melville, speaks of "Ferguson's Club," and says of one of the suspected that "he is certainly with Ferguson, and those rogues who cut Ross's throat." He was not long left at liberty. Luttrell notes, in his diary of June 1690: "Mr. Ferguson was taken up the fifth at the Excise Office by a messenger, by virtue of a warrant from the Earl of Nottingham, upon some letters and instructions come from Scotland from the Lord Melville, and all his papers were seized too. Sir J. Cockeran of Scotland was also taken up for the same." Sir J. Cockeran is the Sir John Cochrane who was also a pre-Revolution associate, and, it should be noted, was a brother-in-law of Viscount Dundee. "The warrant," Luttrell notes, "is for misprision of treason, and treasonable practices, but upon an examination of the matter they are both admitted to bail." The day after the arrest, King William wrote himself to Lord Melville:—

"Prés de HAYLACH, June 6, 1690.

. . . "Et aye este informe que J'ay fait arrester Sr. J. Cocheran et Ferguson. J'espere que vous pourrez envoyer au plus tot des informations nécessaire pour les faire transporter en Écosse, sans quoy Je crains que selon les lois d'Angleterre on sera obligé de les relâcher." . . .

It was well for Ferguson that he was not arrested in Scotland, like Neville Payne, where torture could be applied, and where there was no *Habeas Corpus* Act, nor as yet any substitute for it, and that Ross and Annandale had made it a condition of their revelations that they were not to be asked to become witnesses. Several notices in the Leven and Melville Papers show the anxiety of the Government to catch him, and their difficulty in doing so. Mr. D. Nairne writes to Lord Melville on the 14th of June: "I wrote last post to the Earl of Leven, and gave him some account

of what was reported of Ferguson's imprisonment: it is commonly reported that he was taken up on some information from thence, which I know nothing of. I find Dr. Hamilton, that used to be often with your Grace, is a constant companion of Ferguson's." On the same day a gentleman, writing to a country correspondent, observed: "Mr. Ferguson is bayled." Luttrell mentions that on the 21st of June a motion was made for the discharge of Ferguson and Cochrane. "The King's Bench took time to consider," and on the same day the Earl of Nottingham wrote to Lord Melville: "Cochran and Ferguson have been to-day at the King's Bench bar, and will be discharged of their bail by the end of the term, and perhaps sooner, if the matters alleged against them cannot be produced in Court." On the 26th the same statesman reverted to the subject: "Sir Wm. Lockhart knows that there can be no way of detaining Sir John Cochran and Mr. Ferguson longer than till the last day of this term, unless your Grace sends the informations that are against them." And although the informations did not arrive, and they were discharged on the 10th of July, the authorities did not despair of securing them after all; for Neville Payne had been seized north of the Border, and his silence and steadfastness could be operated upon by the solvent of torture, which it was impossible to apply in England. Sir William Lockhart wrote on the 30th of August to the Earl of Melville: "As to Annandale, the last paper makes that as plain as can be, so that he is entirely in the King's mercy; besyds it's all he knows, for he would never deal plainly with him: what people may be convinced here, I think are known to Ferguson's Club. . . . There's no doubt you may have them from Nevill Payne, who all men knows to know so much of Ferguson and these here as may hang a thousand: but except you put him to the torture he will shame you all.

Pray you put him in such hands as will have no pitie on him." Again he wrote a little later: "You would cause take great pains on Neville Payne, for supposing Skelmorlie were taken we have no evidence but Ross and he; and pray you be pleased to mind him as to Ferguson, for Annandale knows him little." Later still, speaking of Annandale, he writes again: "This informer hath shifted and gone about strangely. First, he said Ferguson knew all, and afterwards it seems, when he had spoke to him, he said he knew nothing, in short, except the design in generall, and that he had sent and received letters from the late King. . . . Pray, your Grace, send me a double of that letter to Ferguson." That the solicitations as to "minding Payne as to Ferguson" were kept in view is shown by three of the queries which were put to him when he was subjected to the torture.

". . . . 6. Whether Mr. Robert Ferguson used to visit him, and what passed betwixt them?

". . . . 13. How came Mr. Ferguson to be acquainted with Mr. Buckley's pretended message to the French King?

"14. Upon what ground did Mr. Ferguson oppose it; and what methods were taken to make it ineffectual?"

The instructions signed by the King, and countersigned by Lord Melville, directed the Council to "proceed against him to torture with all the rigour that the law allows," on a second occasion; but at both times the victim was firm, "and in a boasting manner bade them do with his body what they pleased." The Council used, as is said by one of them, Lord Crawford, "all the severity that was consistent with humanity, even unto that pitch that we could not preserve his life and have gone further, but without the least success, for his answers to our whole interrogatories that were of any import were negatives."

The queries addressed to Payne about Ferguson recall those that had been seven years before put to Lord Russel,

and, with the same savage machinery, to extort confession, to Earlston and Carstares, and they were met with the same loyalty; but the English country gentleman was the adherent of a cause whose historians have not had the same gift of eulogising their martyrs as has been possessed by their opponents, and the thumb-screws and the boot, which would have immortalised some sufferer of the previous reign, have only won for him a semi-sneering commendation of his "fanatical loyalty."

Nothing having been got from Payne, and no further evidence being forthcoming, Ferguson was free from danger as far as the Montgomery Plot was concerned. "Ferguson," says Dalrymple, "was seized in England, but eluded the arts of those who examined him by greater arts." Immediately he plunged into fresh intrigues.

CHAPTER XV.

1691-1694.

PLOTS OF 1692 AND 1694.

THE experiences of the Montgomery Plot seemed to have convinced the Jacobites of the earnestness and value of their new ally, and a correspondence was soon established between the exiled monarch and his repentant subject. Next year Ferguson was in close communication with St. Germain, and the Stuart Papers contain several documents which show how zealously he had espoused the cause of the dethroned house, and the general wisdom of his suggestions as to the best means of forwarding it. The events of the Revolution, and the access to wider sources of information, had placed the episodes of the past ten years in a very different light from that in which he had previously regarded them; and it would seem that, in becoming satisfied that much that he had formerly believed and repeated to the disadvantage of King James was erroneous, he had plunged to the other extreme, and allowed opinions that were based on solid fact also to be swept away. Certainly his Jacobitism has the ring of sincerity, and his conversion to a sound political faith is said to have given peculiar pleasure to King James. He was active in the collection of information for transmission to France, and in the preparation of aggressive political literature at home. He displays the same familiarity with the various currents of political sentiment and personal influence that was illustrated at the time of the Rye Plot,

and more than once serious designs of armed invasion and insurrection were heralded by productions from his pen calculated to excite the hopes and inspire the minds of the Jacobite party.

One of the agents who passed to and fro between France and England was a Major Holmes, and among the Stuart Papers is one in his handwriting, endorsed in Lord Melfort's as "Major Holmes's paper given in October 1691." It is as follows :—

“Accounts from England.

Memorials from Mr. Ferguson.

“There is an impeachment designed against the Bishop of Salisbury, Bishop of St. Asaph, and Dean of St. Paul's in Parliament for persuading the clergy to take the oaths to the Prince of Orange as a conqueror.

“Another impeachment designed against my Lord Danby for declaring no King could reign in England while the Act of *Habeas Corpus* was in force, and a great instrument for the clergy's taking the oaths as above written. There is many of the King's friends would gladly have the general excise to pass freely in Parliament, in hopes that the King may come to the receiving of it. There are others of His Majesty's friends of another opinion, that the less money granted in Parliament is a good way to the breaking of the Confederacy. The Parliament will have an exact account of the money already given, and how it was spent. There are several of the King's friends, that are much of the opinion that when it shall please God that the King shall land in England, immediately after or about the time of the landing, the Loyalists in London or thereabouts join all in a body, attack his guards, and seize the Prince of Orange and Princess, with some of the head rogues in their government, and bring them straight to the King's camp. That the cessation of arms, made by the Earl of Breadalbin and

Major-General Buchan, with the rest of the officers and heads of the clans, was both honourable and advantageous for the King's service; but that Lord is not to be trusted by no king further than his own interest leads him. It is a very necessary thing that speedy supplies be sent to the Highlands, both to the officers and clans. It will take air and spread, that there is some care taken of these poor souls, that hath been in a manner starving for want of things fitting for mankind, and will be a great encouragement to the low country in order to their duty. It is very proper £2000 be sent to them with some other necessaries. Brest is the place which is thought fittest for these wants to be sent from; and to land on the Isle of Skye or Island Donald." It would seem that this advice was taken and the money sent.

"That the King come not in person to Scotland; but to send the Duke of Berwick and my Lord Dumbarton, with 10,000 men, with arms and furniture for 5000 horses and dragoons more, and 10,000 stand of arms for foot. That no considerable sum of money be sent to Scotland to a poor nobility that will undoubtedly quarrel about the dividing of it; but when the army is sent, to send money with it, and put it into a trusty commissioner's hands, that will employ it for the use of the army, and will be answerable for it.

"My Lord Dumbarton is very fit for this expedition, his Lordship being generally beloved by all the people in Scotland, since he last commanded there, and quashed that rebellion with so little blood, and is very much beloved in England likewise.

"Arran to command as third Lieutenant-General. He answers body for body, for Argyle and Athol.

"It's proper Athol, Hume, and Argyle have the characters of Lieutenant-Generals. It's a feather in their hats to make them more forward to raise their men conform to their character.

“ If the King could land in England with 15,000 men, either in the west, about Lancaster, or in the north, he will be joined by more than the number he brings with him, and, with God’s assistance, march peaceably to Whitehall. The author of these Memorials will be as soon on horseback as any man in England, with his printer.

“ The King’s friends are very confident that there shall be a very fair fire about him in Parliament; and if he should take Danby in his arms they will pull him out: that it’s not in their power to protect him: and it’s assuredly known that Halifax or Rochester will succeed him. The King’s friends desire to know which of the two His Majesty most desires to fill his place. There is many that is come to the King’s interest, that he hath not power to name their names as yet, but will do it as soon as he hath their leave. Sir Charles Owesley is come entirely into the King’s interest.

“ The Prince of Orange is mortally hated by the English. They see very fairly that he hath no love for them, neither doth he confide in them, but all in his Dutch. It’s certainly known he hath brought over a great many foreigners this summer, and it’s not doubted but the Parliament will not be for foreigners to ride them with a cavesson; and it’s mightily in their heads that these foreigners were brought over to noose the Parliament. He is cursed daily by those of his Council, his bed-chamber, and others that hath very good employments about him.

“ The story of Sir William Sharp being with the Princess of Orange and Nottingham is false, and nothing but a malicious invention of Sir James Montgomerie and Jones against Sir William; and that these idle and wicked inventions diseased the King’s friends at a strong rate, and it was impossible that they could be easy until they were both on the other side, meaning France, and only there to remain still to prevent further jealousies.

“Some months before I came from England, Sir James Montgomerie asked Mr. Ferguson’s advice to take employment under the Prince of Orange, that he might be in a better condition to serve the King. Mr. Ferguson told him he should never give his advice to any such thing, and further told me that Sir James had been with the Princess of Orange quietly, and from that time till my coming into France they never had any meeting.

“All these memorials and discourses which passed between Mr. Ferguson and me, Captain Williamson was always present, and can testify the same which I now subscribe.”

When Holmes returned to England, King James gave him instructions, of which probably the gist is found in a paper entituled on the back, “Additional instructions by G. H. to Mr. Ferguson, 1691,” but on the top only “Instructions by G. H. to Mr. Ferguson”—*i.e.* sent by G. H. to Mr. Ferguson. “G. H.” is George Holmes. These instructions are in Nairne’s hand:—

“You are to find out some safe way, if possible, of conversing with Mr. Ferguson, to whom you shall say that we are perfectly satisfied with his zeal for our interest: that we have received all his advices, and do approve of them, though there are some we cannot be positive in, since they depend upon times and circumstances, as our going or not going to Scotland, in case we shall be in a condition to send any troops there. But we are resolved not to condescend to any particulars, nor deliver ourselves up to any party, being fully resolved to be a common father to all, to establish a thorough liberty of conscience to all our subjects by law, and to secure their libertys and propertys to them. You will desire him to continue his correspondence with this place.

“That he, and all these he can influence, go on vigorously

with disturbing the present Government, and that if Danby be got out, of those proposed to succeed him we like Halifax the best. That, as for the lieutenancy of Ireland, we cannot say anything, since the Lord Rochester has never yet sent us any letter or message. Therefore they are from thence to send us advice, and, if there be no time, to act as they shall think best for our service. That we are resolved to act as a common father to all our subjects, and not to espouse any party in particular. That we will stand firm to our resolutions of having a thorough liberty of conscience established by law, and we will secure the libertys and propertys of our subjects to them fully. That we will mind, in the first place, all those who shall serve us best, and that we shall never forget the services which he has done us, and the zeal he has shown both by his writings and actings: and that we shall quickly send him over some instructions for a private press, which we think fit to maintain in the country for sending papers through the kingdom.

“ We think it for our service that you remain in England so long as with safety you can; for after this we shall have occasion to employ you more than heretofore, our affairs requiring zeal and address to the carrying them on, for it is our interest that, till we have an opportunity to attempt a landing, all our friends act as vigorously as they can to disturb the present usurped Government by all the safe ways they shall have in their power, which they on the place can know much better than we can do. You shall let them know what a considerable army of our subjects we have now here, and that we have reason to hope that things shall mend. Let them send us frequent intelligence, and their advice what we are to do to better our affairs, that in as far as we can we may comply with their desires.”

There was indeed at this time reason to believe that things would mend, for a very deep and dangerous design was

on foot. The spring of 1692 had been fixed on for a descent on England; the assistance of France had been secured, and arrangements had been made for a rising in Lancashire, then a stronghold of the Jacobites, at the same time. King James was to lead the invading force in person, and officers were sent over to organise the levies in the English counties. A camp of 30,000 men, consisting of the Irish regiments in the French service, and an auxiliary force provided by Louis, was formed at La Hogue, in Normandy, and James put himself at its head. The French King furnished transports, and instructed his admirals to co-operate in providing the armament with a strong convoy. A long declaration by King James was published, and, besides the enlistments in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Durham, Fountaine and Holman were busy raising two regiments of horse near London, and it was believed that Rear-admiral Carter had been brought over to the interest of the exiled house. The design was as well conceived, and better worked out, than any of the other Jacobite attempts; and not only in military force, but in the support it received from men of influence in this country, menaced most seriously the stability of the Revolution Government. Patriotic men reconciled themselves to the foreign aid by contemplating William's foreign troops, and felt it perfectly fair to "bring in French to drive out Dutch." Admiral Carter, however, informed the Government of what was in the air, and bad weather delayed the assembling of the various squadrons which were to compose the French convoy. King William was then in Holland, but the Queen and Ministry acted with vigour. The English fleet was speedily got ready for sea; it was joined by the Dutch in the Downs, and large military preparations were made to resist the invaders, should they succeed in effecting a landing. A proclamation was issued for the apprehension of various persons suspected of complicity in the conspiracy. The Earls

of Scarsdale, Lichfield, and Newburgh; the Lords Griffin and Forbes;¹ Sir John Fenwick and Sir Theophilus Oglethorpe managed to escape: the Earls of Huntingdon and Marlborough were sent to the Tower, and a number of other Jacobites were seized. Among these was Robert Ferguson. Luttrell notes that on the 5th of May he was "taken up on a warrant, and examined by the Secretary about treasonable practices," and on the 7th he was sent to Newgate for high treason.

On the 15th the British fleet set sail, and the battle of La Hogue soon followed. The French Admiral, acting under special orders, engaged with an inferior force, and was completely defeated. The largest body of ships that escaped were pursued into the Bay of La Hogue, and, along with many of the transports, burnt under the eyes of James and the troops which they were to have conveyed to England. On the 4th of June Luttrell entered in his diary: "To-morrow the Grand Jury of Middlesex will meet. 'Tis said four indictments will be preferred to them for high treason against the Earl of Marlborough, Lord Stourton, Sir John Fenwick, and Mr. Ferguson." But the attempt had been as completely defeated by the naval victory as its ramifications had been widespread, and the Government do not seem to have thought it advisable to do anything to damp the popularity which the success of the British fleet against the French had gained for them, by harsh proceedings against those who were lying in the State prisons. Marlborough was admitted to bail, and Ferguson seems to have escaped with no worse penalty than deprivation of his sinecure. "His Majesty," says Luttrell, on June 28th, "in his last letter, ordered Mr. Ferguson to be superseded in his post of Excise."

His escape on this occasion neither influenced Ferguson to leave off plotting, nor caused him to resign hopes of a successful restoration by means of a descent from France.

¹ *I. e.* the Irish Lord Forbes, eldest son of the Earl of Granard.

There was in the country much dissatisfaction with the Government of William, and a great deal of Jacobite feeling ; and, in spite of the continual deferring of the fruition of their hopes, the adherents of the house of Stuart were indefatigable in forming new projects. The "old Plotter" continued to comply with the command King James had laid upon him to keep up a correspondence with St. Germain. He watched carefully the course of events in order to calculate the chances of—in Jacobite phrase—"it's coming to my father," and forwarded his information and advice by the agents who were continually passing and repassing between Great Britain and the exiled Court. In a canting letter, written in March 1694, a Jacobite agent remarks, "that which our friend Robin writ did not a little quiet my spirit," and our "friend Robin" is noted in the key as Ferguson. In the previous year, in Sir George Barclay's memorial to King James of 28th December 1693, his opinions were reported, along with those of many others in England, of whom some were of high rank : "Ferguson told me that the English will have this year a very powerful fleet, commanded by men in whom the Prince of Orange places confidence : that they will change their Lord Lieutenants of counties, and particularly the lieutenancy of London and the officers of the Militia ; and that all the power will be placed in the hands of the Presbyterians, who will adhere to the Prince of Orange, and that their intention is to have this summer a fleet of sixty English and forty Dutch ships of the line ; and he entreats your Majesty to beware of those who advise you to come with less than 30,000 men, for they "are not your friends, nor men whom you should trust."

Captain Williamson's memorial of the same date has a characteristic touch, showing that age had not deprived the famous agitator of "his enthusiastic way" of regarding things : "Mr. Ferguson wishes that your Majesty may not let pass the spring without making a descent on England : it

being impossible that the Prince of Orange can support himself when your Majesty comes in competition with him, the people being already much disgusted with his Government. The English would choose to be quit of him, but that will not be in their power unless your Majesty comes to deliver them with an army of 30,000 men, and with arms for such of your Majesty's subjects as will come to join you. And when the preparations for this expedition are finished, if your Majesty commands him, he will come to give himself up in any place in France your Majesty chooses in order to be sacrificed, if the enterprise fails: and the sooner it is undertaken the more certain will be the success."

In the year 1694 considerable agitation was caused in connection with the trial of some gentlemen for what was known as the Lancashire Plot, and the proceedings of the Government in connection therewith. Sir John Trenchard, a country gentleman from the neighbourhood of Taunton, who had been involved along with Monmouth and Shaftesbury in the design of an insurrection in Charles II.'s time, was then Secretary of State, and Aaron Smith, who had acted as solicitor for Colledge, "the Protestant Joiner," and nearly wrecked the arrangements between the English and Scots conspirators at the time of the Rye-House Plot, held the post of Solicitor to the Treasury, to which he had been appointed after the Revolution. They were both men whose zeal rather outran their discretion, and, being zealous Whigs, were inclined to press considerably harder on those suspected of Jacobitism, than other statesmen who had held office. One Lunt, who had been a Jacobite agent, and thought he could make a better thing of it by turning informer, had given information to Trenchard about the preparations made by some gentlemen of Lancashire to assist King James's attempt; and Aaron Smith, armed with a set of blank warrants, and accompanied by a party of Dutch Horse-Guards, hastened down to Lancashire,

where they broke open houses, seized papers, and committed a considerable amount of violence. Most of the gentlemen whose houses were visited had fled, but some seizures of arms were made, and at Standish Hall was found a draft of a declaration by King James. Several gentlemen were committed for trial at the Manchester Assizes, but the discovery made having been disproportionate to the parade displayed and violence used, a cry was soon raised that the whole story of the plot was a mere invention, like those which for so many years had been circulated about Papists, Whigs, and Jacobites in turn, designed only to ruin innocent men, serve the ends of Government officials, and put money in the pockets of base informers. Lancashire, where the mass of the population sided strongly with their local leaders, was in a ferment, and preparations were made by the friends of the accused to conduct a vigorous defence. They secured the testimony of one Taaffe, an associate of Lunt's, of equally doubtful antecedents and character. "The next step," says Tindal, "for defeating the whole plot was engaging Ferguson to write in defence of the Lancashire gentlemen, and to asperse their accusers; and this stratagem had such a notable effect that the Popish mob at Manchester, animated by reading Ferguson's paper, which was almost in every hand in that county, had resolved to prevent the trials of the prisoners by stoning the King's evidences to death. But those who knew they would be acquitted prevailed with the mob to forbear the execution of that inhuman sentence till the trials were ended."

Ferguson's pamphlet was entitled, a "Letter to Secretary Trenchard," and was so incisive and vigorous that Macaulay prefers to see in it "the last gleam of the malignant genius of Montgomery." But not only was it universally attributed to him at the time; he includes it in the list of his works upon which he looked back with satisfaction, along with another utterance on the same subject, headed, "A Letter to

my Lord Chief-Justice Holt about the Lancashire Plot." "The execrable Ferguson," says Oldmixon, "the Cameronian apostate, called it (*i.e.* the plot) in his letter to the Lord Chief-Justice Holt, 'a sham contrivance of some little Ministers to ruin those that were accused without cause.'" He also dismissed some of the seized letters, over which zealous officials shook their heads, as "baggatells and stories of Robin Hood and Littlejohn." There was a good deal in the actions of the Government that laid it open to severe attack, when an auspicious occasion gave the assailant the ear of the public; and Ferguson struck a responsive chord when he made the abuse of power the theme of his letter to Sir John Trenchard. "It was," says Smollett, "replete with the most bitter invectives against the Ministry, and contained a great number of flagrant instances in which the Court had countenanced the vilest corruption, perfidy, and oppression."

Ralph, in his "History of England during the Reign of King William and Queen Mary," gives a full abridgment of this celebrated letter. He introduces it with a short *résumé* of Ferguson's career, which lends special interest to his present arguments and animadversions: "In the meantime it is necessary to observe that the famous Ferguson, who had been so deeply concerned with the malcontents in the reign of King Charles, who had accompanied both the Duke of Monmouth and Prince of Orange in their several expeditions to England; who had been made House-keeper to the Excise Office in the present reign; and who, growing again dissatisfied either with the measures of the Government, or the very contemptible reward he had received for the great share he had taken and the risque he had run in assisting to establish it, had gone off to the Jacobites, and entered as deeply into their service as he had ever done into that of their adversaries,—this Ferguson, concerning whom it had been written

by Bishop Sprat, that he had declared a resolution to be in every plot during his time,—this extraordinary man, who was personally known to every Minister, and to every one of their implements, who had every year since his last tergiversation set forth a pamphlet or two which endangered his neck, and who had hitherto escaped with impunity, now set forth a familiar letter to his old friend and fellow-labourer in the cause of liberty, Sir John Trenchard, on the abuse of power daily practised by himself and the Scots Secretary of State, Johnston, in their several offices; and the wicked methods they pursued to suborn witnesses, and furnish them with forged matter against those whom they intended to sacrifice. The charge he brings against the first of these Ministers consists of thirteen articles (which so much the more deserve to be enumerated because they make a part of the history of these times, and may be an admonition to those to come), and in his preamble to them, he lays down the following postulata, viz. :—

“ 1. That whether there was an original contract between former kings and the free people of this country or not, there was a very formal and explicit one between them and King William.

“ 2. That by not punishing the instruments of the miscarriages of the late reign, who were by law the only persons punishable for them, King William had made himself responsible for the political crimes of his civil officers.

“ And 3. That the majority of those who had taken the oaths to the new Government, as well as those who had refused them, did believe him to be only King *de facto*, not *de jure*.”

He draws from these postulata some “very severe conclusions,” which, in Ferguson’s own words, are stated thus: “I do challenge all mankind, ere I advance any further, to

name so much as one thing called a grievance under the reign of King James that has not been repeated or outgone since the reign of King William. Maybe we have not had all the same things over again in *specie*, but we have had them to the full in the value and equivalent. And for those we have not had specifically repeated, it is not because they have been thought unlawful, but because the passions and inclinations of King William and his Ministers are of a distinct kind from those of King James, and travel in a different road from what his did. But if the former King did in some things exceed the bounds which the law had chalked out as the measures of his Government, that he might thereby have brought all his people to stand upon the same level of capacity, in reference to civil and military employs, and in order to putting a period to persecutions for matters of mere conscience and revealed religion without damage to the Church by law established, either in its dignities, properties, or jurisdictions, they were so noble and royal ends as might have served to excuse, if not to justify, the little irregular excesses taken and pursued for compassing of them. Whereas we have, since the Revolution, not only seen the principal offices of honour and trust, rightfully due to natural subjects, conferred and bestowed chiefly upon foreigners, but have had the misfortune to be often arbitrarily robbed of our liberties, which is both the leaving us no legal bottom at all to stand upon, and infinitely worse in itself than the having our countrymen, fellow-Christians, and neighbours brought, in the things forementioned and practised under King James's reign, to live upon the square with ourselves. And the invasion upon our most essential right, as well as the first and most inseparable and valuable property, which is that of the freedom of our persons and safety of our mansion-houses, has been so daringly, notoriously, and often repeated, that the Ministers of King William have

been forced to solicit and procure divers Acts of Parliament, sometimes to legitimate them beforehand, to commit rapine upon our liberties; as in the dispensing oftener than once with the *Habeas Corpus* Act, and at other times to indemnify them for the violences they had perpetrated without a previous allowance. And as we have had the same, or the like oppressions and grievances renewed which we pretended to be under, and so much complained of before, so there are two very ill-favoured aggravations attend the latter, wherewith the former were no ways accompanied. One is, that we have increased our disease where we expected our remedy, and that those who set up for our physicians have enlarged our wounds in the stead of curing them; and that we have poison administered to us in the room of healing medicines. All men know with what different preapprehensions in many of the people King James and King William came to the crown, and the first as much exceeded our hopes as the last has disappointed them. The other is, that whereas King James erred upon example in most things, without seasonable and temperate caution given him in any, and upon the authority of the judges (whose office it was to expound the law to him in some), the illegalities of this reign are in contradiction to promises, in violation of stipulations, in defiance of warnings, without the countenance and concurrence of the judges, and with the improbation of the Parliament registered in divers of their addresses; from which it is very obvious for peevish people to draw a couple of unfriendly, but very natural consequences, namely,—that as by repeating the worst of things chargeable upon King James's Government, as well as by perpetrating those of a more mischievous nature than any it could be accused of, you have ridiculed all the motives of his abdication."

Ferguson proceeds to the detailed charges against Sir John Trenchard: That he had hounded out his messengers

armed with blank warrants, in itself an arbitrary measure of which they made as arbitrary a use: That in some of these warrants the charge was not specified, contrary to the letter and spirit of the law: That where specified, it was on suspicion only, without deposition on oath, and therefore illegal under a judgment of the King's Bench in 1690: That matters were assigned as crimes insufficient in law to justify detention: That the Secretary did not declare the grounds of apprehension to have been sworn to before him: That his messengers had searched houses by night as well as by day, without the presence of a constable or headborough: That his officers had carried off the title-deeds of men's estates, their account-books, and their private letters, without numbering or allowing them to be marked; and one of the Lancashire gentlemen had been robbed of a purse of gold by Captain Baker and his Dutch coadjutors, "The Conservators of British Liberty:" That innocent people had been kept for three or four months in the custody of a messenger without being heard or examined: That the making gaols of messengers' houses was illegal: That the prisoners had been treated with rudeness and barbarity, lodged in unwholesome chambers, debarred the visits of their lawyers except in presence of a keeper, and mulcted of civility-money to escape being put in irons: That bail had been refused inailable cases, and none but such as Aaron Smith thought fit to approve of accepted: That Trenchard had employed trepans to decoy indiscreet but well-meaning persons into crimes; and that he had "countenanced and abetted the subornation of infamous felons to swear innocent and peaceable persons out of their lives." In support of these charges, instances are brought forward, and Ferguson gracefully acquits "His Grace of Shrewsbury" of any complicity in the oppression, except as he was used by the two Secretaries, the chief of whom "withdrew into the country

to observe at a distance how the mine would spring." He then produces various instances in support of the assertion that "the trade of suborning was grown so common, that every pitiful fellow who had aspired to Court favour, or a Court pension, durst openly practise it," and proceeds to deal in detail with the witnesses "who had been gleaned up by the creatures of power to appear against the gentlemen of Lancashire." Of the past careers of all of them he gives a very graphic account; and "lastly," says Ralph, "he takes occasion to observe that, though the violent prosecution of plots was the disgrace of both parties in the reign of King Charles II., nobody was prosecuted by those in power for detecting the forgeries of these plots, or exposing the detestable lives and characters of the persons then called the King's witnesses; whereas, such was the violence of the present times, that a warrant had been issued from the Secretary's office in these words—'That they (the persons empowered to serve them) should apprehend and bring before them (the said Secretary or Secretaries) the persons of _____, together with their papers, for conspiring and endeavouring to suborn witnesses against the lives and credit of several witnesses for their Majesties against persons charged with high treason, etc.,' 'which looks,' continued he, 'like a summoning all the malefactors in the several gaols of the kingdom to come and list themselves witnesses for the Government, with an assurance, not only of protection and rewards, but that they would have the satisfaction and pleasure to see those imprisoned and punished who should dare to prosecute them for their crimes.'" Ralph, summing up his own impression of the facts, concludes that "the representation partakes as much of a party bias as the very prosecutions it is calculated to expose. The man who makes it was of as violent a turn as Trenchard, Johnston, or the most thorough-paced implements of power;

and tho' we are not furnished with sufficient matter to complete his facts, we may justly question his ingenuity." The letter at all events "induced all the effects that the most sanguine of his party could have expected from it." When the trials came on at Manchester, Lunt made some damaging mistakes in his identification, and Taaffe declared that the whole plot was a contrivance between him and Lunt. The counsel for the Crown threw up his brief; the prisoners were triumphantly acquitted, the witnesses stoned, and the judges hissed out of the town.

Orders were then given to prosecute the informers for perjury, and the Lancashire gentlemen, not content with this, instituted a prosecution of their own, and endeavoured to damage the Government on the ground of corruption by raising the matter in the House of Commons. But the Houses of Parliament found that there had been sufficient ground for the prosecution in the existence of a dangerous conspiracy; and the Government, as soon as Lunt and his allies were found guilty of perjury, instituted a prosecution against them for conspiring against the lives and liberties of those they had accused, intending in this way to get at some of the witnesses for the Jacobite gentlemen. When this became evident, the Jacobites refused to produce their evidence against the informers, and the prosecution dropped.

CHAPTER XVI.

1695-1703.

JACOBITE PAMPHLET—PLOT OF 1696.

FERGUSON'S pen was not idle during the next year. Queen Mary had died on the 28th of December 1694, and the loss was a severe one to William both as an individual and a ruler. The Queen's popularity had been great, and the consciousness that a Stuart, an Englishwoman and a Churchwoman, shared it, had done much to soften the resentment with which many regarded the haughty and discourteous Dutch occupant of the British throne. The Jacobites were stirred to renewed activity; every grievance and difficulty that could operate in their favour was more zealously descanted on, and ere long the literary warfare was succeeded by designs even more desperate and determined than before. Three pamphlets of 1695, one of which is not in his own list, are attributed to Ferguson. The omission of one from the list may be accounted for by its really being only a second instalment of the first. These two dissertations were either actually written in response to inquiries from some of the author's friends in the country, or were thrown into the form of a letter as the most convenient mode in which to handle freely the topics discussed. Even assuming the correspondent to be an imaginary one, the author could speak far more strongly "in a letter to a country gentleman as an answer to his query," than in an impersonal and general treatise. He secures the type of friendly auditor, to whom

he can unbosom himself, and the epistolary form of literary effort was a favourite one with him. Whether addressed to a friend or an enemy, it was a weapon in the use of which he excelled, and shows his style to much better advantage than historical narrative. The first of these pamphlets is, however, most interesting from its relation, not to its companion, but to another that had preceded it by six years. For in it Ferguson answers himself, and it is the converse and contradiction of the *Vindication of the Prince of Orange*. The theme was an awkward one, but it is handled with remarkable skill. He does not blink the fact of the strange change in his own opinions, but he does not obtrude it. He faces it boldly, but it occupies very little space in a dissertation of forty-seven pages. The heading is itself ingenious: "Whether the preserving the Protestant Religion was the motive unto, or the end, that was designed in the late Revolution? In a Letter to a Country Gentleman in answer to his First Query." The pamphlet¹ is an able and sarcastic examination of the actions and motives of the leaders of the Revolution. It deals very cleverly with the doctrine of passive obedience, and limits that duty by the rules of the constitution; and the author's solitary reference to his own example is found, after the statement that, to "the laws of the land as the standard and measure of the people's obedience, we stand bound, limited, and obliged by the laws of God and the doctrines both of the Old and New Testament, and this upon no less penalty than damnation." "Which," continues the Plotter, formulating the standard of his own conduct in the later half of his career, "let no man, upon the testimony of a flattering or mercenary priest, or the authority or verdict of a profane and atheistical statesman, think he will or can escape without unfeigned repentance, evidenced in sincere and hearty endeavours to restore

¹ *Vide* Appendix III.

the King. Nor are you to be surprised to hear this kind of theology and politicks from me, seeing that, according to Dr. Sherlock's phrase, as no man is forbid to grow wiser than he was, so I blush not, but glory to confess, and have deeply bewailed it, that I have been heretofore misled by false notions, and have entertained hypotheses about Government neither reconcilable to our laws, nor to the peace of communities, but *errando discimus non errare.*" His course of education had certainly been most protracted and complete, and its results were late in coming.

The second pamphlet dealt specially with a phase of the political situation arising from the Queen's death. As the Crown had been held by William and Mary jointly, and she was not a Queen-Consort, but a Queen-Regnant, some raised unsuccessfully the question whether her death did not involve a dissolution of Parliament. The point was argued by Ferguson by way of answer to the query stated in the heading of his treatise, "Whether the Parliament be not in law dissolved by the death of the Princess of Orange? And how the subjects ought and are to behave themselves in relation to those papers emitted since by the style and title of Acts? With a brief account of the Government of England. In a Letter to a Country Gentleman, as an answer to his Second Question."

The subject was one more suited to a constitutional lawyer than to an ex-divine, or active popular politician, and Ferguson sets out with a disclaimer of special qualification for the task, couched in terms that would infer the conclusion that the pamphlet was the response to a real and not a feigned request for information. "Though you have exceedingly mistook your man in demanding my opinion about a case that is so much out of my province and circle, that it hath hardly come within the boundaries of my conversation either with books or men, yet not being

altogether a stranger to the nature of the Government and rules of the constitution under which I live, nor wholly unacquainted with the ancient and modern transactions of my country, neither utterly ignorant of the practices of ages as they remain registered in histories, I will rather both venture my reputation, and run the risk of being censured for straying beyond the limits of my proper studies, than not obey your command in what you are pleased to require of me, and thereby give you fresh and repeated evidence, both of the authority you have over me, and of the deference I pay to your merit as well as your quality."

Though not of much interest now, the paper was an able polemical composition at the time, and exhibits extensive information and deep research. Tacitus, as usual, is largely resorted to, and one simile is an apt one: "Parliaments, howsoever and whensoever they came to be instituted, are now incorporated into the constitution of England, as Apelles' picture into Minerva's shield." High Jacobite as Ferguson had become, he still maintains the limited character of our monarchy, declaring that our Kings are limited by Magna Charta and the Statutes. But he zealously combats the more dangerous heresy of the future which would lodge arbitrary and unlimited power in a popular assembly. "The only danger," he suggests, "we can have of the Parliament's being abolished, is the people's growing weary of them, and being provoked to hate them." Such might arise should they betray our rights for pensions or bribes, or "turn more mobbish than a Dover Court." He insists that the authority of the Commons is limited as that of the other estates of the realm. "The preservation of, and adherence to, the constitution is the measure and standard of the whole legislative power and authority of England." "No Parliament hath, or can have, authority to divest the subjects of a title or right to the freedom of their persons,

and of a property in their estates, save in cases wherein, by the known and common laws, they are forfeited." "However large, extensive, and unlimited the power of a King and Parliament acting in conjunction may be, yet there are some essentials and fundamentals in the English Government whereof a few relate to the privileges incident to the people of England, as they are a free nation, and divers are intrinsic to the royal authority, and inseparable from the person and dignity of the King; that the very constitution makes them sacredly unchangeable, and sets them out of the reach of King and Parliament to meddle with." Parliaments, he maintains, have no title to destroy the English monarchy, yet the Revolution Parliaments have made the ancient hereditary monarchy an elective one. The Great Charter, and the other muniments of the constitution following upon it, he well says, "were not laws of manumission from bondage, but declaratory of an ancient and inherent title to liberty;" but the Revolution Parliaments, by suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act, and granting a power of imprisonment to the King and his Ministers, had infringed the liberties of the subjects. Reverting to the enforced abdication of King James, he asserts that the King's own faults did not merit so great a penalty, and that the chief errors of his reign were due to bad Ministers, and contrasts with them the foreign wars, the load of taxation and the subsequent evils, which a country farmer had described as "the blessings we had got by swopping kings." At great length he develops the immediate contention of the pamphlet, arguing it out with skill and knowledge, and not a little satire.

Interesting as was the constitutional question suggested by the death of the Queen, who was a partner in the royal power, and the source of the royal title, a more potent instrument for influencing the popular mind was to be found in the national and commercial jealousy between William's Dutch

countrymen and his English subjects. The unpopularity of his foreign guards and favourites from Holland was an important factor in English politics, but on matters of trade there was a real divergence of interest, and plenty of provocation to ill-will. The massacre of Amboyna was not forgotten, and English merchants abroad felt the use that enterprising Dutchmen made of the events of the Revolution to raise their own prestige in the eyes of Asiatics and Africans. There was therefore not a little party capital to be made, and not a few real grievances to be alleged, in connection with the measures and events that Ferguson now commented on under the title of, "A brief Account of some of the late Encroachments and Depredations of the Dutch upon the English; and of a few of those many advantages, which by fraud and violence they have made of the British Nations since the Revolution, and of the means enabling them thereunto."

The great theme of the treatise was the disproportionate advantage that had accrued to the Dutch out of the Revolution and the war that followed it, and the poor return which they, with their grasping habits and trade jealousy, had made for the blood that had been so freely shed in the Low Countries. He does not ignore the Bantam tragedy, and suggests that while for some great object the English, who are "a generous people" would barter heaven, the Dutch would in the same circumstances take good care that they should at least secure earth. Indeed, on account of their relations with Holland, the "cap and coat should be the badge of our nation, especially of the Westminster Senators." Insisting on the nature of the office of Stadtholder, he points out that the Dutch represent us in Asia and Africa as a dastardly people, over whom they have constituted their servant a monarch. The prerogatives of the British monarch he would not withdraw, for our Kings would "then be reduced to no better condition than that of Doges of Venice;" but he

declares that William should resign either the Monarchy or the Stadtholdership, and concludes that "it would be wise to return and remit him back to them." The advancement of Dutchmen to stations of importance in Britain is commented on; Bentinck is recommended to consider the fate of Gaveston and Spencer, the unfortunate favourites of Edward II, and the number of Dutch officers in the army is alluded to. The influence wielded by a Dutchman as ambassador in Spain, where trade questions were so vital, is described as a committing of the sheep to the wolves to keep, and the lavish conferring of English estates, even of those attached to the Principality of Wales, upon the Dutch favourite is animadverted upon. The taxation for the Dutch war, the payments to the Dutch troops borne on the English establishment, the £600,000 handed over to the wealthy United Provinces for the expedition to England, which had been the most profitable outlay they ever expended, and "the hiring of foreign Princes to continue in this united and conjunct alliance," of all which the burden fell on the English people, are all dwelt upon. The treacherous delay of Count Solms at Steinkirk, which had cost many brave British lives, and of which Ferguson may have heard much from his brother—for the regiment in which he served on the bloody day was nearly cut to pieces, and the one to which he was transferred a day or two after the battle had also suffered heavily—is once more depicted. The effusive liberality of William to the French refugees, who "are better off than they were in their own country," is contrasted with "the murder of Glencoe by his express order and command." Among "the felicities we enjoy during this reign of rest to our liberties," are enumerated the profit made by the Dutch out of the money transmitted for the payment of our own troops in the Low Countries through the lowered rate of exchange, the additional profit in the monopoly of supplying stores and provisions, and the capture of Namur, the only value

of which lies in its "enlarging the barrier of the Dutch." "While the English and others fight, they do only win," and the rejoicing that followed the only striking military success that had brightened the long years of the foreign war, recalls to the writer's mind the custom of the Spartans, who ordained their generals to sacrifice an ox when they triumphed by policy, but only a cock when they succeeded by force. The one-sided bargain made with Holland under "our Belgic King" is contrasted with the policy of Queen Elizabeth and Cromwell, who, when embarked in similar operations with the same allies, insisted on obtaining substantial guarantees that their friends would not overreach them, by having English garrisons placed in certain of their forts. The ambition of William of Orange is descanted on, and he is described as carrying within him, "ten Sultans, twenty Moguls, and forty Czars." Coming more directly to matters of trade, the writer comments upon the unequal proportion of ships of war furnished by the Dutch, the neglect of our laws relating to shipping and navigation, and the development of manufactures, due to the influence of the Dutch connection, the audacity of the Dutch in pressing into their navy every tenth man out of each of our ships entering their ports, their hostility actively shown to our African Company, as to which he says, alluding to Dr. Burnet, "the fore-named mitred gentleman will soon find the heats of the nation to rise beyond the remedy of his vinegar bottle." He also deals very cleverly with the English jealousy of the Scots African Company, seeking to turn it to the disadvantage of the Dutch, but warning the English against resentful measures towards the Scots. He argues that the original idea was due to a Dutch desire to raise up competition and ill-will between England and Scotland, and quotes information to that effect which he had received in a private conversation, and which he is careful to say he may use without infringing the "inviolable fidelity

and steady secrecy" he had always prided himself on observing as to matters communicated in confidence. "*Fides Belgica* and *fides Punica*," he asserts, "are equivalent, and the word of a Carthaginian Senator or General and that of a Dutch Prince are of the same stamp and allay." How startling are the changes that a few years bring round, and how strange to find the friend of Shaftesbury reverting to that statesman's earlier mood of *Delenda est Carthago!* Yet can an age in which leaders of popular opinion, grown grey in the service of the State, are found leagued in amity and alliance with men whom five years before they had described as "marching through rapine to the disintegration and dismemberment of the Empire," cast a stone at the inconsistency of our ancestors?

The practical application of the enormities of the Dutch is found in the answer to three questions, of importance to the laws, the constitution, and the consciences of men, which Ferguson applies to "the Senate of the Kingdom, the members of the Privy Council, and to the gentlemen of both gowns to resolve." The first is "That they would tell us what the meaning of a King *de facto* is, and how such a one differs from a King *de jure*?" He points out that many pay allegiance on this distinction, "but so far as I am capable of understanding reason and good sense," no one can be King *de facto* who is not King *de jure*. "He that is styled a king, but is not rightfully so, is by all laws of God and men a robber and usurper." "Instead of allegiance, we are bound to raise the hue and cry after him," for "things are stubborn, and will not change their natures because of the complimentary soft words that are fastened upon them."

The second question, assuming that some consider the Prince of Orange to be King *de jure*, asks "How this right to be King accrues to the Prince of Orange, and from what sources of law and justice the royal style and authority

come to be derived unto and vested in him, and by what tenure he bears the royal name and exerciseth the sovereign power?" There are only three ways in which he could have attained it—by hereditary succession, by conquest, or by election. No one will pretend that it was by hereditary right, he and his Parliament repudiate the idea of conquest, and none can assert that on a demise of the crown any set of people stand constitutionally vested with a right to elect. Our monarchy is hereditary, not elective, and all changes in its tenure had been made not on the ground of a right to elect, but on the plea of controverted title in the monarch. Therefore the Prince cannot be a King *de jure*, and must be an usurper.

The third question, assuming that he be King *de facto* or *de jure*, demands, "Of what signification and importance in their judgments and opinions the word King is?" For the received idea in the present generation is very different from that declared by the laws of the realm. Is he a sovereign Prince, sacred and inviolable, or only a trustee invested with delegated power? Again Ferguson enters the lists with Dr. Burnet, and, dealing with the Bishop's statement of when resistance is lawful, argues that the instances he produces (the embassy to Rome, the making Popish Bishops, and the exercise of a dispensing power in reference to the penal laws about religion) were insufficient to infer a design on the part of King James to subvert the constitution. He compares Dr. Burnet to "him that fired Diana's temple to protect himself from oblivion." If the term be taken in the second sense, no one ought to swear allegiance to the Prince of Orange, for it may be every man's duty to assist in deposing him; and, after the miscarriages in Government that have been descanted on, nothing remains to be added, but "To your tents, O Israel." For by ordering the massacre of a whole tribe at Glencoe, and by shielding and advancing the Earl of Breadalbane, even on Dr. Burnet's principles, he stands con-

victed of subverting the constitution. This pamphlet was dated December 20th, 1695; and that the exhortation "To your tents, O Israel!" was not meant for empty words, was proved before many months of the coming year had passed.

The death of William was an event on which the Jacobite leaders now began anxiously to speculate. The continuity of Government which the survivance of Mary would have secured could no longer be preserved if he were to die suddenly, and designs for an invasion gained new life from the fact that the tie which held together the existing order was now a slender and single one. The contingency was not put out of sight in any of the Jacobite circles, and in some of the lower ones steps were contemplated which would produce it. "A Memorial," dated 28th June 1695, in the Stuart Papers, evidences that Ferguson was still forwarding counsel and encouragement to St. Germain's, recalling the days when he sought to seize L'Estrange's papers, and proving that if, as he had boasted, he would never be hanged for papers, it was not for lack of audacity in concocting and circulating them: "Ferguson's advice is that your Majesty put out a proclamation at your landing, and that the forces of the Prince of Orange in England be encouraged to take part with your Majesty by promising them their arrears.

"He wants your Majesty's orders what he shall write about that time—that he has some little papers ready, but if he receives your Majesty's directions about any particular matter, he will take care to perform them effectually.

"Whether your Majesty would have anything wrote about the last declaration."

"The Jacks," as one of the subsequent informers calls them, were active at the time, and the Memorial is very near in date to a visit of one of the English conspirators to France, referred to in the trials of the following year.

In the spring of 1696 another formidable attempt was projected; and as at the time of the Rye-House Plot, there was again a plot within a plot—a general design of public commotion, and an inferior bevy of conspirators who contemplated proceeding by assassination and murder. Before William left for Flanders for the campaign of 1695, a number of individuals, named Charnock, Porter, Waugh, Mathews, Goodman, and Sir William Perkins, had discussed the feasibility of seizing his person, and either carrying him off to France or putting him to death. His departure for the seat of war had prevented this scheme taking any definite shape, but in the course of the winter of 1695-6 it was resumed. At the same time the idea of a descent on England was again mooted, and Lord Aylesbury went over to France, where he had an audience of Louis, and a combined effort for a restoration was concerted. In the month of February a secret visit was paid to England by the Duke of Berwick, who held conferences with the leading Jacobites, conferred commissions, and announced that King James would soon arrive at the head of a large army. Many of the Jacobite gentlemen actively enlisted men in England, Sir John Friend nearly completed a regiment, Sir William Perkins was busy with another, Sir John Fenwick had gathered four troops, and various other gentlemen had undertaken for four regiments of dragoons. On Berwick's return to France he met James, who had set out from Paris to place himself at the head of the troops which had been collected at Calais; while a number of transports were ready at Dunkirk, and a French fleet had arrived to convoy them to England. But the discovery of a subordinate scheme to assassinate King William put the English Government on their guard, and forestalled all these preparations. The principal mover in this design was Sir George Barclay, who had come over shortly before the Duke of Berwick, and

placed himself in communication with Charnock and his associates. So completely was the scheme "for the confusion of the rotten Orange," as one of the conspirators phrased it, developed, that both place and time—the 22d of February—were fixed for the attempt, and horses and horse-furniture in readiness. But when the day arrived three of the conspirators had revealed all to the Government, and a general raid was made upon all the Jacobites in London. At the same time, the Duke of Wirtemberg's aide-de-camp having hurried over from Flanders with an account of the intended invasion, an express was sent off to summon home some regiments from the Low Countries, while Admiral Russel hastened to take command of the fleet. With fifty sail of the line he swept the French coast, and shut up the transports in the harbours. After waiting for some weeks at Calais, King James was forced to return to St. Germain, and the troops that had been collected for his service were ordered back to their garrisons.

The alarm had been great, and for some time the executions were not idle. The accounts, indeed, of the schemes of the malcontents, and the vengeance that followed, read like a repetition of the Rye-House Plot and its penalty, with the parts inverted. There was the same tendency to prejudice the accused by the mixing up of the two designs, and the bloody cabal of a few exercised the same fatal influence on the credit and the fortunes of a great party. The brutal levity of Jeffreys is absent, but it is little less revolting to find, amid protestations of fairness, the utmost severity of an expiring law exerted to damage men on trial for their lives. Captain Charnock is the Jacobite Walcot, Sir John Friend occupies a similar position to Lord Russel; and as Algernon Sidney was six months later sent to the block, so the following winter sees Sir John Fenwick expiate his inexpiable crime of revealing the treachery of leading Whig

statesmen, by forming the last example of a sufferer under a Bill of Attainder. In the vengeance that followed the Rye Plot, and the invasion of Argyle, nothing had aroused more indignation than the consigning to death by the strict letter of the law of Sir Thomas Armstrong upon his outlawry, and of Argyle on the sentence recorded against him after his flight when convicted for "explicating the test." The rigour of the English treason law had called for reform, and in days when either side might be in danger to-morrow, Parliament had, in the session before the Plot of 1696 was discovered, readily sanctioned a measure alleviating its worst hardships. Two points in particular had pressed harshly on political prisoners. They had no right to see their indictment till it was read in Latin in Court; they could not be defended by counsel. By the new law both of these important rights were conferred upon them, and the Act was to come into operation on the 25th of March 1696. Yet, although the conspiracy was only discovered in the end of February, Charnock, King, and Keys, Sir John Friend and Sir William Perkins, were hurried to death under the old law, and every appeal they made to the equity which the Legislature had already declared was relentlessly refused. Perkins, indeed, received his sentence within six hours of the moment when the privileges he besought would be matter of right. On the scaffold the sufferers met their fate with fortitude, firmly denying the assertion that the assassination scheme had ever received the sanction of the exiled Prince, and, with one exception, asserting their fidelity to his cause. The State trials of 1683 and 1695, compared together, well illustrate that no political party can be trusted to avoid injustice when terrified in its day of power, and that none fails to find its heroes and its martyrs in the hour of adversity.

Among those seized by the Government on this occasion

was Ferguson. He is said to have been discovered under a bed in Gray's Inn Lane, and was secured in Newgate. Curiously enough, his old opponent L'Estrange was arrested at the same time. On the 10th of March 1695, Luttrell noted: "Last night the Lord Mayor caused a strict search throughout the city, and seized about 100 suspected persons, and amongst them the famous Ferguson." Again, on the 24th, he says: "The evidence against Sir John Friend bore that Ferguson was one of several who conspired at several meetings to levy forces for King James here." According to a very doubtful witness quoted by Oldmixon—a spy called Mathew Smith, who was suspected of inventing much of his story to damage Lord Shrewsbury—"Ferguson was in the plot, and was called on to equip." The reward designed for him, according to Smith, when the King enjoyed his own again, was to be a Privy Councillor. But his own narrative of his actings in the Rye Plot receives, perhaps, some confirmation, from the fact that on this occasion also he was one of those whom the violent conspirators did not take into their full confidence, and in whose presence they spoke under some restraint. He seems to have been zealously engaged in the design for the rising as well as in others that had preceded it, and the person brought to trial with whom he was most connected was Sir John Friend, who did not approve of, and was not formally charged with, the assassination plot. Porter, the Rumsey of 1695, who was deeply concerned in the assassination, and indeed went to select the place most suited for carrying it out, but turned chief informer, said, in his deposition before the House of Lords on 3d March, that "the day before he went to view the ground at Turnham Green, he dined at the Nag's Head in St. James' Street, with Sir George Barclay, Sir William Perkins, Sir John Friend, Ferguson, and Homes; that Charnock either dined there or came in after dinner;

that Harrison, *alias* Johnson, came to them after dinner; that they discoursed there privately, one among another, of the design upon the King's person, and inquired what men and horses each could provide, and it was talked publicly among them all of the preparations that were making in France all along the sea-coast: those who talked about the design in private were Sir George Barclay, Sir William Perkins, Charnock, and this informant. Sir John Friend, observing their whispers, said he desired to be fairly dealt with; that he was as ready to serve the King as any man, and that he fancied something was behind the curtain that was concealed from him." At Sir John Friend's trial Porter described these private conversations as "whisperings among themselves," and explained that it was upon a remark made by himself, when Sir George Barclay said that "some people that were not so violent had written over into France to stop this business," that Sir John asked, "Is there anything that is hid behind the curtain? If there be, I am not fairly dealt withal; I will proceed no further." It is not, perhaps, a far-fetched conjecture, in the light of his former experiences, that Ferguson's was the hand that sent this message to St. Germain's.

Blair, another informer—who had been, though it is difficult to believe it from the whimpering tone of his narrative and his language in the witness-box, a captain in Lord Dumbarton's regiment—mentions that Ferguson had introduced Sir John Friend to Colonel Fountain, a Jacobite who on a previous occasion had raised a troop of horse. He also said that about the time of the siege of Mons (in 1691) he was sent to France by Sir John Cochrane to inform King James Sir John could serve him from his interest among the Presbyterians; that Sir John had received £1500 or £1800 at London, and had distributed it faithfully for the King's service, and thought the money went to Buchan or

Cannon; and that "Ferguson told him two years ago that he helped Sir John Cochrane to the above-mentioned £1500 or £1800." It is a striking illustration of how civil war divides private relations, to find the Plotter providing the sinews of war for those against whom his brother was acting in the field, and to learn that the monarch who paused before embarking at Hoylake for the battle of the Boyne, to press his removal to Scotland, where justice was less kind to the accused, received before long a recommendation from his own general of the conspirator's brother as "faithful and attached to the service of your Majesty." The picture is completed when the same despatch of General Mackay is found also to acknowledge the services of the brother of the General Buchan whose military chest the Plotter had aided to replenish.

"Sir John Friend," said Blair, "brought him acquainted with Ferguson, who was very great with him. He heard Ferguson say he thanked God he had grace and time to repent of the villainies he had committed against King Charles and King James. When the King heard it the water stood in his eyes for joy. This was at Symond's Tavern." A strange episode, and yet very much in keeping with Ferguson's own language in his communications with St. Germain. The secret history of the Revolution seems to have revealed much to him, and the fuller information acquired in England to have convinced him of the falsity of much he had heard and believed when hunted and in exile. And there is a real and sincere tinge of personal regret and repentance whenever he recalls the fierce and bitter attacks he had made on the person and character of James. It is, too, quite consonant with what is recorded of James II., that, amid the ruins of the sovereignty of three kingdoms, he should derive peculiar consolation from the change in the most extreme of his adversaries, who had

emphasised political writings with a stern tone of personal antagonism.

Blair also declared that "Vernatti gave him a couple of Ferguson's books, but he burnt them. He heard Ferguson say he was engaged with Sir John Friend, and was to go along with him, and Sir John told him he would bring in a great many men. He has been in company with Sir John Friend, Ferguson, Sir William Perkins, Captain Ridley, who was formerly a sea-captain, Richardson, and Edmonds."

At Sir John's trial Blair was asked by the Solicitor-General: "Pray, what has Sir John Friend said to you about Ferguson? Whether was not he to have been an officer in his regiment?" "No, sir," replied Blair, "but Sir John Friend said he would join, and Mr. Ferguson himself has told me so." He explained that this had been more than two years before, and repeated Sir John Friend's remark that Ferguson would bring in a great many men. One little incident told by Blair is amusing. Sir John Friend showed him a letter which he said he had written to King James. "I told him," said Blair, "I was so well pleased with the penning it, that I believed Mr. Ferguson had a hand in it, and he was very angry that I should think he was not able to write and did not write the letter himself."

Mathew Smith, the spy already referred to, published, in the year 1699, a little book called "Memoirs of Secret Service," which professed to give the history of his own treachery, and the communications he was all the while making to Government while mixing in the society of the Jacobites. The Ministers who employed him seem to have set little store by his revelations; he was perpetually pressing them for money, and in his Memoirs complains that his infamy did not receive the rewards of gratuities from the public treasury and the freedom of the City which Livy records as given at Rome to those who revealed con-

spiracies, or the honours which King Ahasuerus bestowed upon Mordecai the Jew. According to his own account, he specially set himself to run down Ferguson; but if so, the Plotter contrived to keep him at arm's-length. Although his knowledge was scanty, and supplemented by nonsense, it is of interest as illustrating the life of the practised conspirator at this period, and completing the parallel between 1683 and 1695. Smith is found on one occasion informing the Duke of Shrewsbury that "I am now particularly acquainted with one Holmes, and also with one who attends Ferguson; that by means of these two new acquaintance, I shall learn more of the proceedings of the King's enemies, they being the persons that receive and send most of the letters that go to and from France by the private boat." It was then agreed, he asserts, that he should try and "find out the private boat," and "if possible, get Ferguson secured." Three weeks later he reports: "I was asked last night to go to the tavern, but refused, and to-day was told that Ferguson was there. I now know most of his company, so that he cannot escape me long. But a method must be taken that upon the least notice he may be forthwith seized, for he is very shy—it cannot well be till after Christmas." Soon after he writes that, on Thursday night, at a tavern in Covent Garden, "there will be most of Ferguson's company. I do not know but that he may be there, by reason I am obliged to come alone. I have here enclosed sent a paper, which I received from a Scots gentleman, who is also to send me Glencoe's case, lately written; it's a very scurrilous paper, and I believe Ferguson is the author of it. This is certain, that both the English and Scots caress him mightily." "It will be difficult," he says again, "to take him in a lodging, but if a method was concerted it would not be so to take him in a tavern." In January 1695,¹

¹ *I.e.* 1695-6.

he reports that Captain Vernatti, Ferguson's companion, had told an acquaintance that "his friend has written a new book, and that the printer is tedious in the printing it, but that it will be out in a short time; I am promised one of them;" and, on the 24th of the same month, "I have enclosed sent a pamphlet just come out, written by *Uncle*, as the party call him—that is Ferguson; it is a very scurrilous libel." "That was," notes Smith, "the Depredation Book." He also asserts that after Ferguson was taken he wrote to Secretary Vernon, urging that Hewet and Ferguson should be confronted before the Council, Hewet having been Ferguson's dispenser of his books, and knowing most of his concerns. But the Secretary did not take the trouble to answer his letter. Smith also said that this "Hewet attended Ferguson, and declared to him that Ferguson knew of the design on the King's life; and that Ferguson declared he would mount himself to meet the late King at his landing." It was said at the time that Smith's revelations were worth little—that he had been befooled by some one who gave him scraps of information culled from the Post-boy, as if they had come direct from France; and he prints a letter to a friend at the end of his *Memoirs* to show that he "never had to do with any such person who made it his business to write news out of the Post-boy." In this letter he devotes a good deal of space to the Plotter. "One of the principal motives," he says, "which induced me to a correspondence with Mr. John Hewet, was to find out the labyrinths and mysterious windings of a man that will be eternally famous in all the annals of conspirators, called *Uncle*, otherwise Ferguson. As 'tis impossible for this Luciferian priest, or Salamander, to live out of the fire, it made me the more ambitious to entertain his confident, that I might trace his Machiavellian intrigues; and in searching after them I had all the just suspicions in the

world to make me conclude that I had found an old Roman agent wrapt up in a Geneva charter, according to the received maxims of the Church of Rome, which makes no difficulty to give her emissaries permission to put up what colours and wear what disguises they please, provided it advances the interest of the Holy See. This composition of iniquity, who always acted in masquerade, and indeed is a bane to all civil societies and governments, tho' he has proved the unhappy occasion of bringing several of his companions to an infamous exit, yet, by what fate I know not, has all along made a shift to keep himself out of the briers, like the cat who made use of the monkey's foot to pull the chestnuts out of the fire in order to save her own from burning. I cannot but admire at the folly of the malcontents that they should be so stupid as to take into their faction such a notorious hypocrite upon his cajoling them to believe that he could do them extraordinary service by his Billingsgate style, which he pretended had worked such wonders in the two preceding reigns. For his books are generally stult with such fulsome and notorious untruths that they cannot stand the test of any reasonable man; he skulks in a corner to write, and then comes out incognito, being conscious to himself that "R. F." on the title-page is sufficient to discredit whatever drops from so malicious a pen. When this walking Amsterdam of religions was justly spewed out of the Government, he made his first flight to the Melfordian faction, and only herded with those hot-headed men, they best suiting his genius, for plotting and faction is his darling study and delight; in short, he is turbulent and uneasy in all Governments. Whilst the late horrid plot was in agitation, I could not believe, upon the first intelligence I received of that matter, that there were to be found so great a number of villains as were thought necessary to execute so barbarous a design. . . . But I

ceased to wonder when I was informed that Uncle was often in their infernal cabals, and entertained his disciples with preparatory discourses on the subject of king-killing doctrines, to work them up to a temper to receive any impression. In order to execute this damnable design, this firebrand, as his confident told me, wrote that scurrilous pamphlet called the Depredation Book, to prepare the way to it by casting therein most scandalous and lying reflections on His Majesty's person and Government. But what is more execrable, he had also a book in embryo, which was to have sanctified the villany in case the conspirators had succeeded in that horrid design. I must beg your pardon, sir, if you think this borders too much upon the common topicks of satyr and invective, and that I have suffered myself to be carried too far by my resentments; for I must freely own to you that I am not able to be master of my usual temper, when such a finished system of wickedness comes in my way." Smith says that he made the acquaintance of Holmes, and Hewet, his nephew, at Sir William Perkins's house in Hertfordshire in the autumn of 1695, and that Hewet had brought down from town "a bundle of libels entitled, 'Advice to the Country in their electing of Members for the ensuing Parliament,' " which were to be dispersed about the country. When told by Sir William that Ferguson was the author, Smith "seemed amazed, and replied that I could not believe that Ferguson was one of us. Sir William and Mr. Holmes both told me that he was a true convert, and did King James great service by his writings; that he was reconciled to the King, and much in his favour; that he had brought several over to the late King's interest, and had a pardon for his former offences. Smith set to work to find out from Hewet how long Ferguson had been "one of our party," whether he was really the author of the pamphlet, and "wherein he had done, or could do us, any

service, he having been one who was always accounted one of King James's enemies, and came over with the present King." "For my part," said this despicable traitor, "I rather believe him to be a spie than a friend."

Mr. Hewet answered that he had been a considerable time of the party, and "had written several bitter and satirical things against the Government, and at that time was forced to hide by reason they supposed him to be the author of several pamphlets lately published, which they concluded to be his by the style. Mr. Hewet then named to me a dialogue between the K——, the E—— of P—— and Madam V—— and Glenco's Case, with others which I have now forgot, written all by Ferguson, as also the pamphlet he then brought down. He further told me there was but one besides himself that knew where Ferguson lodged; that he never went out but in the night; that if the Government found his lodging, they would find him amidst his books and papers, for, says he, 'he is always a writing.' I asked Hewet how he came to be entrusted by Ferguson, and for what reason. He told me that it was his uncle who got Ferguson reconciled to the late King; and that they, mentioning his uncle and himself, were the persons who dispersed and sold his books for him. And Ferguson often ordered him to throw his books into noblemen's houses. That this was one way by which Ferguson served the late King—that, being a man of intrigue and interest, several persons made terms by him with the late King who would not trust any other person." So successfully did Smith worm himself into Hewet's confidence, that he took refuge in Smith's lodgings when his name was in the proclamation. In the end of the year Smith applied to Hewet to get him a private lodging. "He took me," says the spy, "to a barber's house in King Street, Bloomsbury, and told me it was a private place by reason there was a back-door into Kingsgate Street, that looked only upon stables and

coach-houses; that the landlord was a Papist, and that Ferguson had lodged there a considerable time. The man of the house was very free to let me have the lodging, and then asked Mr. Hewet how the gentleman did that lodged there before, to whom he so often came? I asked Hewet who that gentleman was. He replied it was Mr. Ferguson, and that he took that lodging for him; and also was employed to take private lodgings for several other persons who came from France." Smith says that he daily entertained Hewet at taverns, and often supplied him with money. "By my caressing of him in this manner, I knew what company Ferguson used, and at what taverns he drank, and upon what subjects he was a writing, etc."

"It must here be observed," he remarks, "that I never exactly knew where Ferguson lodged, neither indeed did I press to know, lest it might bring me under suspicion, greater affairs being at this time in agitation. In December, or the beginning of January 1695 [*i.e.* 1695-6], Mr. Hewet brought me a book written by Ferguson, relating to the Scots East India Company, and acquainted me that he was then upon an extraordinary piece of work, and that so soon as it came out I should have one. In January 1695, Mr. Adamson, a watchmaker in Holborn, a Papist, and since dead, with whom I dined, told me that Ferguson was writing a very sharp book; that one Captain Vernatti (who was accused for the murder of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey), Mr. Ferguson's great companion, had promised him one of the books so soon as they were printed; and accordingly Captain Vernatti did afterwards, as Mr. Adamson informed me, give him one of Ferguson's 'Depredation' books. This still confirmed me to believe what Hewet had before told me of the said book. I acquainted Mr. Hewet with what Captain Vernatti had told Mr. Adamson. He replied it was true, and that Captain Vernatti was the other person, besides himself, that Mr.

Ferguson confided in. By the way, if one is to judge of a man by the company he keeps, he may presume to say Mr. Ferguson is of the Red Letter stamp, his confidants, and the persons he most interests being of that persuasion; and I have been informed he has now a son in Genoa, who is a priest. Hewet assured me that I should have one of the first of the 'Depredation' books that was printed off, for he was to sell them to make money for Ferguson; and that his uncle Holmes and he were allowed some books for their trouble in disposing of them. The truth of this I did not doubt, by reason I received a little before a list of what ships were lost and taken in the war, from Mr. Holmes, and he had several to dispose of, and I suppose Ferguson writ that. Within a few days after this, as I was walking with Mr. Hewet, he parted with me in Drury Lane, and then told me he was going to Ferguson, and if any of the books were printed he would bring me one, if I would meet him in half-an-hour at the Nag's-head Tavern, in James Street, Covent Garden. According to his promise he came, and brought with him one of the 'Depredation' books, which he said was written by Mr. Ferguson, and that he had just then received it from him, and it was corrected by him. I paid him half-a-crown, tho' the price they were sold at was but eighteen pence; which I thought hard, having the same day paid twenty shillings to a taylor for Hewet's use.

"The said Hewet sold many of the books, and gave some away by Mr. Ferguson's order; and some of the books, as Hewet told me, were sent to his uncle Holmes' house, and by him sold and dispersed. Whilst these books were selling, Mr. Ferguson being sharp, pressed Hewet for the money. Upon his making complaint to me, I gave Hewet three or four shillings to make up his account with Ferguson, and in return he gave me another book. The dispersing and selling these books was about the latter part of January and the

beginning of February 1695 [*i.e.* 1695-6]. I went with Hewet once into St. Martin's Lane, when he carried a book, as he told me, to one Mr. Murray, a Scotsman, and a tutor to the Lord Kinnoule, a Papist. He acquainted me that Murray assisted Ferguson with money to print his books. So that Hewet knew not only the author but also the printer, and the persons who assisted him with money. He often told me that he had been a long time employed in selling and dispersing libels, and that he, with one Canning, a bookseller, dispersed the late King's declarations. Here are sufficient reasons to believe Ferguson to be the author and publisher of the infamous libels before mentioned, and proof that Hewet was the disperser of them." A "libel," it is well to remember, then signified anything written on the opposite side of politics, and, if cogent and vigorous, it was "infamous," or at least "scandalous." Only one of the papers mentioned by Smith is included by Ferguson in his own list, and if the rest of the spy's hearsay was of equal value with that which attributed a son in priest's orders to a man whose family consisted of two daughters, it must be taken with a considerable grain of salt. But his story, as he tells it, is sufficient to show that Ferguson only mixed occasionally with the Jacobite circles to which Smith managed to obtain access; that he was regarded as an ally of influence and importance; and that cautious men who looked on others with suspicion, were ready to trust his discretion and fidelity.

It was on this occasion, on the 27th March 1696, three days after Sir John Friend was sentenced to the death of a traitor in all its horrible detail, that the strange episode took place, when the messenger who had been ordered to look for Ferguson after the Rye Plot swore before Sir William Trumbull, who had succeeded Trenchard as Secretary of State, that Sir Leoline Jenkins had then charged him to shut his eyes, should he fall in with the person for whom he was ostensibly

to search. The Government seem to have been very anxious to convict him, but no more evidence was forthcoming, and what existed was too scanty to risk a trial. Very probably it was at this time that his MS. on the Rye Plot found its way to the State Paper Office, from which it never returned.¹

Although he again escaped safely in the long run, Ferguson had in connection with this plot a more prolonged residence than usual in a State prison. Whether it was that the Government hung on till after Sir John Fenwick's attainder, in the hope that evidence might arise, or simply took advantage of an Act passed authorising the detention in prison of those arrested, he did not now shake off his temporary reverse of fortune so quickly as he was generally fortunate enough to do. He had been arrested in March, and on the 5th September Luttrell's entry is: "The Lord Forbes and Sir John Knight, with several other persons in custody for the plot, are set at liberty, some on bail, others discharged, but Mr. Ferguson continues still in Newgate." Again, on the 26th of the same month, he notes: "Yesterday, Captain Walbank, Mr. Lee, Sincore Blackburn, etc., were bailed, but Ferguson, Meldrum, and others were remanded." And it is not until the 15th of January 1696-7 that he is able to relate that "This day Ferguson was admitted to bail."

Several years passed before he again came into prominent notice as a political intriguer; but he wrote upon some of the questions of the day, and, in particular, took a lively interest

¹ Oldmixon, referring to Bishop Kennet's statement that Sir John Fenwick was advised to take the course of accusing the great Whig Lords by a person who, though he had been a great instrument in the late Revolution, yet wished to gratify a private resentment, observes: "Whether he meant Robert Ferguson or Mr. John How, he mistakes as to great instrument. For King William never trusted Ferguson with his secrets, nor was How any further instrumental in the Revolution than by joining the Prince of Orange at Exeter." But the Bishop evidently refers to the Earl of Monmouth, and it is now matter of history that Fenwick in assailing the Whig Lords only spoke truth, although wise enough to save his own friends by only telling half the truth. Major Wildman was at this time acting as Secretary to Lord Monmouth, better known by his subsequent and illustrious title of Peterborough.

in that which was then convulsing his native country relative to the Scottish African Company, and the unfortunate settlement on the Isthmus of Darien. He notes among his publications "A Letter to Robert Harley, Esqr., in favour of the Scots Act for an African Company," and a pamphlet headed, "A Justification of the Scots' right to settle in Darien"—doubtless an abbreviated description of the "Just and Modest Vindication of the Scots design for having established a Colony at Darien: with a brief display how much it is their interest to apply themselves to trade, and particularly that which is foreign," which was published in 1699, and is generally attributed to his pen.¹

It is a considerable book of over 200 pages, and the case for the Scottish colony is exhaustively stated. The author

¹ It is interesting, as yet another instance of the contrasts of the time, to notice a letter addressed a little later by the Plotter's brother, Colonel Ferguson, to his old associate Carstares, dealing with "the heats of the Darien settlement," which the politician had been doing his best to stimulate. The Colonel of the Cameronians was a strong Presbyterian, and faithful to his salt as a soldier of King William. He writes a very graphic account of the ferment in Scotland to the King's confidant, and curiously enough finds a parallel in the excitement that preceded the long years of civil war. "We are ripening for destruction: it looks very like Forty-one." The illustration very well points the distinction between the so-called Revolution of 1688 and the "Troubles"—between constitutional reform, that knew when and where to pause, and revolutionary violence, which Lord Lytton perceived when he pointed out that the Revolution vindicated the policy not of Pym and St. John, but of Hyde and Falkland. The Colonel encloses to the academic divine a lampoon in Latin verse by Dr. Pitcairn—"An allusion to that fable in *Æsop* of the frogs desiring a King from Jupiter, who gave them a stork," and asserts that "treason is become so common that nobody takes any notice of it. They talk publicly that unless the King will grant them the legal settlement of Caledonia, that they will address him again with forty thousand hands at it, and call a Convention of States. We are all in a flame, and I am sure the fuel comes both from France and England to keep it up. The Lord preserve our master and Counsell from ought, and let all his enemies be confounded from Dan to Beersheba." How serious the state of affairs was is best evidenced by one circumstance he mentions: "There are likewise some officers who have been desiring the army to address for their arrears. You see, Sir, what kind of people we are, and how the King our master is served by us. But, God be thanked, there are more honest men amongst us than knaves. So I hope there will be no address from the army at this time." This information must have given weight to the request with which the letter concluded: "If our master be necessitate to break some regiments, I hope he will have a regard to his old servants. . . . We have our good service to plead for us, and that we have been honest and loyal from the beginning, and will continue so to the end."

sets out with a reference to the general advantages of commerce, and argues that the great prosperity of France was due to the attention paid to her trade and manufacture, while Scotland owed to her neglect of the same the small figure she made in Europe. He maintains that the Scots would make good colonists, citing their success in Ulster, and deals at length with the rights and wrongs of the controversy with the Spaniards. He shows a remarkable acquaintance with the history of colonisation up to the time, and deals with the religious aspects of the dispute in a spirit of liberality and good sense.

A James Wallace, writing to Wodrow from London, on 26th December 1699, informed him: 'There is a second piece of Hennis came out against Darien, in answer to Mr. Ferguson's, so that there are now five pamphlets in whole for and against this affair.'

In the same year (1699) the death of his father, the old Laird of Badifurrow, who, after attending the "True Funerals" of Montrose, had lived quietly in the Garioch while his notorious son had run through the chequered scenes of his turbulent career, brought once more into notice the broken and almost forgotten links that connected him with the scenes of his youth and the fortunes of his family. Robert Ferguson's next brother, William, had predeceased their father,¹ and on the 14th of August 1699, his son, Mr. James Ferguson, advocate, obtained in the Court of Session, for himself and others having right, letters of general charge against Mr. Robert Ferguson, minister in London, eldest lawful son to the deceased William Ferguson of Badifurrow, to enter as heir in general to his deceased father. On 19th June 1700, Mr. Robert Ferguson not having entered appearance, Mr. James Ferguson was confirmed in his possession by the Court.

¹ After his eldest son left Scotland, the old Laird of Badifurrow had re-settled his estate upon himself in life-rent, and his son William in fee, so that, although predeceasing, William had in one sense succeeded him.

The same year some attention was aroused by the proceedings in the Upper House of Parliament against Watson, the Bishop of St. David's, who was accused of simony, and deprived of his bishopric. The erring prelate was a strong Jacobite, and "the party," says Tindal, "though ashamed of him, yet were resolved to support him with great zeal." A production of Ferguson's is entitled "The extraordinary Case of (Watson) the Bishop of St. David's further cleared and made plain from the several views that have been made of it; wherein the articles against him are considered and his Lordship vindicated from them." It appears in his own list as "The Large Review of the Summary Vindication."

This publication bears the stamp of 1703, but before that year closed Ferguson was again engaged in a transaction of the old familiar nature, in which the principal actor was the notorious Lord Lovat, who on two critical occasions in his life was to owe safety and seizure respectively to members of the Plotter's family. The incident in which these two restless spirits were now involved was one which throws some light on the relations of Scottish statesmen and a phase of English party politics.

CHAPTER XVII.

1704-1705.

THE SCOTS PLOT.

THE activity of the Jacobites had been considerably diminished by the accession of Queen Anne. Many who looked to the ultimate restoration of "the King over the water," were quite ready in the meantime to accept a condition of affairs in which a Stuart filled the throne, and Government was conducted on Tory principles. Of this, the statesmen of St. Germain's were well aware, and they seem for a time to have worked more in the direction of careful preparation for the future, than of effort in the present. Such activity as they manifested through their agents was rather designed to keep up communication with their sympathisers in Britain, and maintain in them a habit of looking to France for the object of their loyalty, than to engage them in schemes for an immediate restoration. The policy of the English Government was one of conciliation towards the Jacobites, and, as far as they could influence Scotland, their great object was to alleviate the condition of the Episcopalians, and contrive a *modus vivendi* between them and their neighbours of the Presbyterian Establishment. The Opposition, on the contrary, found that the weapon which lay readiest to their hand was to accuse the statesmen in office of Jacobite leanings, and a plot, real or pretended, to bring back the Chevalier was an episode that could never be too much dilated upon. It was their interest to arouse all the appre-

hensions which hung round the name of the Popish Pretender, while that of the English Ministers, of the Tory party, and of the High Churchmen was to refrain from stirring up agitation on such matters, and when it was started to discourage its continuance. In the House of Lords the Whig influence preponderated, but a large Tory majority prescribed the decisions of the Commons.

In Scotland the Duke of Queensberry and the Earl of Cromarty were Secretaries of State, and the former held the office of Queen's Commissioner. A proclamation of indemnity was published in March 1703, which enabled the Jacobite exiles to reconcile themselves to the existing order, and many returned and took advantage of it. The session of that year was a very stormy one in the Scottish Parliament. Its chief achievement was the "Act of Security," which carefully provided for the succession to the Crown in event of Queen Anne's decease, on other lines than those adopted in England, and indeed excluded the monarch called to the southern throne, unless conditions were enacted to obviate all English influence. It was dominated by a fiery spirit of national pride, which the energy and eloquence of Fletcher of Salton fostered and the passions of the populace outside still more inflamed. Between the Cavalier section, which was now of considerable strength; the "country party of malcontents, which took its rise from the disappointments of the Darien Settlement," and acted under the leadership of Hamilton and Tweeddale; and the Presbyterian Whigs, who rallied round Argyle, the Government had a difficult course to steer. Ere long the Cavaliers had reason to consider that the Duke of Queensberry had betrayed them, and flung themselves into opposition. Among those who were either prominent opponents or official rivals of the Duke of Queensberry stood the Dukes of Hamilton and Athole; and soon a curious scene of intrigue was disclosed

through the intervention of Ferguson the Plotter, whose long experience had given him a sharp eye for such transactions. After the promulgation of the indemnity, which only extended to Scotland, it was observed that many notorious Jacobites passed over to the northern kingdom. Among them was Simon Fraser of Beaufort, generally known as Lord Lovat. A considerable amount of mystery encircles his aims and proceedings, which is not lessened by the fact that his own accounts of his actions are quite untrustworthy, for he was an incorrigible liar. He had, it would seem, a certain amount of authority from the Court of St. Germain's, which, like every one else who had anything to do with him, regarded him with suspicion, and at the same time sent over a Captain Murray, mainly to keep an eye upon his conduct. He was empowered to communicate with the Highland chiefs, which he did, and was also strictly charged to confine his efforts to the Highlands, which he did not. Indeed, on his own showing, he had communings with the Duke of Queensberry, the Duke of Argyle, and the Earl of Leven, who, he says, "may at this time be styled the triumvirate of Scotland." Such were the known opinions of the two last that, on Fraser's return to France, the Earl of Middleton remarked upon his account, that "he had not been as careful as authors of romances to preserve probability;" and another Jacobite, Lord Aylesbury, wrote from England, accusing him of being an agent of Queensberry, and declaring that "such men ought to be confined in mad-houses if they are fools, and in the Bastille if they have their senses." The one thing in which he seems to have been really in earnest, though he treats it himself as a clever device he hit upon in order to amuse the Duke of Queensberry and throw him upon a wrong scent, was an intrigue by which he endeavoured to revenge his private hatreds. There was a standing feud between the Murrays and the

Frasers, and a dark crime of Lovat's earlier days had inflicted a deep personal injury on the house of Athole, so that between the two men there was an inextinguishable animosity. Lovat now went to Queensberry, and gave him information which the Commissioner received with delight. He informed him that Hamilton and Athole were active partisans of the exiled Court, producing as evidence against the latter a letter written by the exiled Queen, which is believed to have been intended for the Duke of Gordon, but on the back of which Lovat had written Athole's name. This letter the Commissioner immediately forwarded to the Queen, and Lovat had no difficulty in obtaining from him in return a pass to go to London, where, as Tindal puts it, he "had some meetings with the practising Jacobites about the town." He took with him Colin Campbell, younger of Glendaruel; and his principal associate in London was William Keith, a nephew of the Captain Murray who had been sent to keep an eye on his motions. This "Mr. Keith," says Lovat in his Memoirs, "in order the better to inform Lord Lovat of the situation of the King's affairs in England, introduced him to old Ferguson, so well known for the author or accomplice of so many conspiracies, plots, and criminal intrigues. He had conspired against the life of the late King James, but he afterwards became his zealous servant and public partisan; and as he had a very sharp and satirical pen, the royal party employed him in writing libels upon King William, and invectives against his Government and friends.

"Mr. Ferguson received Lord Lovat with open arms; and having been previously informed by Mr. Keith of the credit this nobleman possessed at the Courts of France and St. Germans, he made to him a magnificent detail of all he had done for the King, and how much he had advanced his interest in the English Parliament. Two days after he gave to Lord Lovat commissions on his own part, and on the part

of several illustrious personages in the English Parliament, addressed to the Queen and Lord Middleton. He also gave him a letter of recommendation to his brother, Major-General Ferguson, who had entered into the service of King William, and at that time commanded the Scottish regiments in garrison at Bois-le-Duc, entreating him to render the same services to Lord Lovat as he would to himself in his situation. This letter was the means of saving Lord Lovat's life about a fortnight after. He now took leave of Mr. Ferguson with mutual protestations of friendship and esteem, the latter most humbly entreating him to represent to the Court of St. Germain's what he had done, and what he was resolved to do for her service."

Lovat made his escape to Holland by means of a passport in a false name, which the Duke of Queensberry obtained for him from the Earl of Nottingham, the English Secretary of State; and it was owing to the assistance of Ferguson's brother—the Major Ferguson whom in 1690 he had endeavoured to "debauch," but whose rank at this time was not that of Major-General, as Lovat says, but of Brigadier—that he managed to get safely away when recognised by some of his countrymen in the streets of Bois-le-Duc.¹ He had scarcely arrived in Holland, when he heard that Sir John Maclean had been seized at Folkestone, and a search had been made for him in his lodgings by some constables, who had treated his landlord very roughly. On receipt of this news, he wrote, "to Glendaruel, to Mr.

¹ Lovat was passing through Holland in disguise. He found himself in great peril, and did not see how he was to reach the frontier. So he bent his steps to Bois-le-Duc, and delivered the letter of introduction to General Ferguson. The General entertained him to dinner, they had a long conversation, and parted promising to meet again next day. But next day the "commander found his garrison alarmed and mutinous." Lovat had been recognised by some soldiers of the Fraser clan on duty as sentries, and their joy roused the suspicion of some of the Murrays, who were commissioned officers. They waited on the General, declaring that Lovat was in the town, and should be arrested. The General listened to them, and sent for Lovat by a private door. He told him that he

William Keith, and to Mr. Ferguson, the famous partisan of King James, and enemy of the Duke of Queensberry ;” but, according to his own account, soon found that Maclean, “to his shame and eternal confusion as the most contemptible of cowards,” had made a confession, while he had been also betrayed by his cousin, that “unnatural monster, perfidious traitor, and execrable villain, Campbell of Glendaruel.” “This Modern Judas” testified to the communings between Lovat and Queensberry, and that Duke, who was now at the mercy of Hamilton and Athole, instead of having them at his, was obliged to resign office, and was, says Lovat, “so much irritated against him, whom he conceived to have duped and betrayed him to his declared enemies, Messieurs Keith and Ferguson, that he became from that moment his inveterate foe.” Lord Lovat’s great design of ruining Athole and Hamilton, however, owed its miscarriage to another than Glendaruel; for, in Lockhart of Carnwath’s words, it was “the famous Mr. Ferguson that soon discovered, and consequently defeated the project, when it was as yet but in embryo.”

Fraser, according to Lockhart, acquainted Ferguson and Keith with his pretended project for King James; “but Ferguson, an old experienced plotter, understanding his character, suspected his integrity; and, it coming to his knowledge that he was often privately with the Scottish courtiers, was by them supported, and had obtained a pass, he soon concluded that there was some base design on hand, and thereupon gave the Duke of Athole notice of it.” Such,

must leave the town without delay, or he would not be answerable for his life. Lovat replied that he would like nothing better, but did not know how. The General secured a post-boy, who had three post-horses and a cart, and after some bargaining in his presence, in which the postillion demanded 100 *louis-d’ors* for the risk of his horses, and 50 for the risk of his life, Lovat arranged for the conveyance of himself and two companions to Antwerp. The General then interposed, and insisted that he should don the carter’s dress, and himself drive the cart out of the town. “In this guise Lord Lovat passed the gates and ramparts of Bois-le-Duc.” He made his way safely across the frontier into the French lines.

indeed, had been the case. As we shall see from his own account, Ferguson had fathomed Lovat's machinations, and spoilt a very pretty piece of mischief. It is probable that in so doing he was actuated not only by the motives which he mentions, but also by others which can easily be appreciated, though they could not be avowed. If Ferguson, as Lovat says, had his attention turned to the formation of a Jacobite influence in the English Parliament, no one could be more alive to the damage which would be done to the cause of the Chevalier by entering into a plot which was certain to miscarry, and the discovery of which would supply the King's bitterest enemies with an effective weapon. His joining in sympathetic conference or arrangements of a rising which was prospective, not immediate, and his eagerness to get at the secret of an undercurrent which might be turned, and reasonably so, to upset the theory of the real existence of such a plot as was alleged, are both in unison and accord with his Jacobite partisanship on the one hand, and the declarations which he made when examined on the other. The result of his action was not only to save Athole, and discredit Queensberry, but also to take the wind out of the sails of a great political party, in a grand manœuvre of faction.

When Queensberry announced the intrigues which Lovat had intimated to him, several of the Jacobite emissaries then in England were apprehended. Not only was Sir John Maclean seized at Folkestone, but Keith and Lindsay, who had been Under-Secretary of State to Lord Melfort, and subsequently to Lord Middleton, at St. Germain, were taken into custody, and others, among whom was one Boucher, were arrested on the coast of Sussex. The Government commenced to investigate the circumstances; but the House of Lords, not satisfied with this, took the matter up, and appointed a Committee of seven to examine into it. On the

17th of December the Queen came in state to the House of Lords, and informed her peers that "she had unquestionable information of very ill practices and designs carried on in Scotland by emissaries from France." The Lords' Committee contained, besides those of Scarborough and the perfidious Sunderland, the great Whig names of Somerset, Devonshire, Townshend, the sagacious Somers, and the shameless Wharton. They set to work zealously to penetrate the Jacobite designs, and unearth anything that might form the foundation of a charge against the Ministers. The House of Commons, however, where at this time the majority was an enthusiastic Tory one, objected to the action of the Lords as unconstitutional, and involving an assumption of powers which were an executive function of the Crown. On the 23d of December they presented an address to the Queen, in which they declared their surprise to find that "when several persons, suspected of treasonable practices against your Majesty were taken into custody by your messengers, in order to be examined, the Lords, in violation to the known laws of the land, have wrested them out of your Majesty's hands, and in a most extraordinary manner taken the examination of them solely to themselves." The Lords again, on the 17th of January, declared that this address of the Commons was "unparliamentary, groundless, and without precedent, and highly injurious to the House of Peers," and on the 18th proceeded to draw up a lengthy representation to the Queen. The same day Her Majesty held a Scots Council at St. James's, at which there was read to her a memorial by the Duke of Athole, in which he laid before Her Majesty all the information he had gained on the subject of Fraser's proceedings, and demanded that the Duke of Queensberry should be asked to give an account of his conduct. "Mr. Robert Ferguson," said the Duke of Athole, "was the first that informed me of Captain Fraser's having been at London ;

and which he did by a gentleman he sent to me, for I have not spoken to him since I examined him in person, by order of the late King William, when I was Secretary of State seven years ago.

"He acquainted me that Captain Fraser was not only gone to St. Germain's with ill designs against your Majesty, but also that the Duke of Queensberry did intend by him and his accomplices to ruin me and several persons of quality in Scotland, by taking away our reputations, lives, and fortunes." He then described how he and Nottingham obtained confirmation of Ferguson's disclosures.

What Ferguson said himself now claims consideration, but it is worth while to previously notice the light in which he was then regarded by the Whig public, as it has been preserved for us by Tindal, an historian of that political complexion. "Ferguson," says he, "ever since he had left the place which had been given him at the Revolution, had been the boldest and most active man of the Jacobite party. He pretended that he was now for High Church, but many believed him a Papist. There was matter of treason sworn against him and Keith, but there was only one witness to it." There is no ground for attaching any credence to the belief current among some of the Whigs, which Tindal here mentions, that Ferguson had become a Papist, and it receives no confirmation, but rather the reverse, from the utterances now to be quoted. His first was, in the circumstances, sufficiently startling, and well qualified to rouse, as it did, the railing indignation of Oldmixon. The Whig historian quotes the complaint of another, "that the Queen, and those she entrusted with her most intimate thoughts, took for current coin what Mr. Ferguson solemnly declared." "Villain," and "execrable miscreant," are the epithets applied; and, *à propos* of the first words, the Whig writer declares that, "if the wicked wretch had not deserved to

be hanged for treason, he should have been lashed for his impudence." On the 24th of December Ferguson published a declaration which opened with these words:—

"I do solemnly declare, that so far as concerns either my knowledge or my belief, there is not a Nonjuror, or one reckoned a Jacobite, engaged in a plot, or that will, against Her Majesty and the Government."

He asserted that "they heartily bless God the Monarchy is preserved against the designs of the Republicans, and that one of the serene family of Stuart possesses the sovereignty," and that in the event of a treaty being made with France, "none would be more careful for the security of the Protestant religion, and of the Church of England as by law established, or of Her Majesty enjoying the royal dignity during her life," as it had been "anciently stipulated in the cases of King Stephen and King Henry VI." He observed that the French were not much to be dreaded "whilst the Ministers of that King knew not better how to choose their tools for promoting them than to employ Captain Fraser;" and that it was not reasonable to suppose that Queensberry, Lord Stair, "the author of the Massacre of Glencoe," or Carstares, "who was deeply engaged in the intended assassination at the Rye-House," should now be involved in a design such as was alleged: that it was not credible that Queensberry's kindness to Fraser was to be accounted for by the mere hope of a pardon through Lovat's influence in the event of a restoration, as Fraser had told Ferguson, and not "rather to be that Duke's getting intelligence from abroad, as his Grace is reported to have affirmed:" that his own acquainting the Duke of Athole, and his informing Her Majesty, were undeniable evidences that both Athole and he were far from being in any conspiracy. He suggested that a further inquiry should be made, particularly an examination of Lochiel, and the other chiefs with whom Fraser had

communicated, and Keith and Campbell, who were most in his confidence. Carstares, who had formerly obtained a pardon for Lovat from King William, ought also to be examined; "for," he says, "'tis not to be supposed but that one endowed with that insinuating faculty and art for which Mr. Carstares is so much valued by his party, as he is known to be, would not wind himself as much as he could into the knowledge of what Fraser came to transact in Scotland, especially when he could not avoid having a prospect of rendering the being let into it serviceable to the interest of the Kirk."

Three days later he submitted a long narrative of his discoveries to the Earl of Nottingham and the Council, which, serious as the occasion was, he could not refrain from enlivening with some of his sarcastic expressions and comical historical illustrations. He relates that he had heard from a Mr. Clarke, in the month of May or June, that a Scotsman, "represented for a person of quality," had gone north after some stay in London, where he had been visited by Keith and several others. His name was then concealed, but it was said he had many friends, and was certain to be protected by the Government. Ferguson afterwards found from Clarke that "this man of great dignity" was no other than Simon Fraser, Laird of Beaufort, who called himself Lord Lovat. On hearing that an order for pursuing him "with fire and sword" had passed the Scottish Council, but was rendered ineffectual by the influence of the Duke of Queensberry and Lord Stair, Ferguson "not only thought himself sufficiently informed who those great men in the Government there were," but "it raised in him a very strong jealousy on what designs, and against whom, Fraser was to be employed in that kingdom." His suspicions were subsequently confirmed, and he resolved to be "as inquisitive as his means and circumstances would allow him." It was

not long before he heard Fraser was coming to London, "and was in a manner deafened with the noise of a Scots plot, wherein the Duke of Athole and divers other noblemen of that nation were said to be engaged." He came to the conclusion that it was intended to ruin Athole by representing him as in communication with St. Germain's, all the more as he had been told by Clarke that correspondence was carried on between Queensberry and Lovat by means of Campbell. He was then invited by Clarke to visit a gentleman at his house, whom he suspected to be Fraser, "and resolved to comply, as not only knowing myself prepared and fortified not to be drawn into any treasonable design against Her Majesty, or to become involved in any conspiracy that might have been formed to the prejudice, if not the ruin, of honest and peaceable men; but as likewise hoping that instead of his finding me so weak and altogether silly as to be imposed upon and duped by him, I might be able to wrest out of him, both on what contrivance he had been employed in Scotland, and to what purpose he was returning into France." He made the visit; found it to be Fraser that he paid it to; and, although not so successful as he had hoped in securing information, was abundantly satisfied that there was no plot formed against the Government, but only an intrigue of the nature he had suspected. For when he observed that Lovat must be a bold man to venture into Scotland in his circumstances, Fraser had replied that he "had as potent and great friends there as he had enemies," and the Duke of Queensberry was "both his singular friend and his protector in a most distinguishing manner." Ferguson asked him about his visit to the Highlands, and found that he had conversed with Lochiel and Breadalbane, and "divers others, whose styles, being more unknown to me than Arabic, I have forgot," but that none of the leading chiefs were inclined to take part in a rising. "Some of the inferior

sort of the people in the Highlands, whom I could no otherwise look upon than as robbers and banditti, were ready enough to join any foreign force, which," says Ferguson, "I could not avoid silently thinking would be held for a banter and ridicule upon the Ministers of Versailles and St. Germain, should he, in compensation for the 500 louis d'ors given him by the Marquis de Torcy for defraying his expenses to and from Scotland, and for bribing the Parliament there, carry it to these places, as the sum and result of his envoyship and expedition." "But," he observes, "as the Duke of Queensberry is much better informed of all these things than I upon an hour's conversation with Fraser, should we have talked *cœur ouvert* as well as *tête-à-tête*, dare pretend to be," a full account of them has probably been "long ere now laid before Her Majesty." For fear of defeating his resolution "to penetrate as far as he possibly could into this mystery of mischief as well as darkness," he thought it best not to alarm Fraser by pressing him too minutely; and, when he heard that Fraser had got away safely by means of a pass from Queensberry, his first reflection was "that the Scots plot which had been so much talked of would be irretrievably blasted by sending away, as he imagined, the sole evidence." He then came to discern clearly that, "instead of a plot against Her Majesty and the Government, whereof the witnesses should be found only in Great Britain, there was a conspiracy on the wheel against some of Her Majesty's most eminent and best subjects, of which the proofs were to be transmitted in a cloak-bag from France hither, as the Holy Ghost was said to have been from the Pope at Rome to the Council of Trent." He determined to wait a few days, and see if he could obtain full evidence, "which should be held both legal and uncontrollable," and "this," he says, "little more than a week afforded me, through my receiving a letter from Fraser in

Holland, directed to me under the stile of Uncle, I being desired by Mr. Clarke, who brought it to me, to return an answer. I readily undertook to do so, and accordingly did by the name of Ralphson." He was no sooner completely satisfied "about what and with whom all Fraser's correspondence from hence thither, and his returns from thence again hither was," than he revealed the whole to the Duke of Athole, requesting him to lay it before the Queen, the Ministers of State, and particularly the Earl of Nottingham. He thus concludes this curious and interesting story of plot and counterplot: "Of what services have been done Her Majesty, your Lordships, and the Government, by the discovery how letters to and from Fraser might be intercepted, I will not take upon myself to say, but do refer it to the judgment of those who have either read them themselves, or have heard them read.

"And as I had not the honour to be known to the Duke of Athol previously thereunto, either *Beneficio* or *Injuria*, save that about seven years since he came by the late King William's order to examine me in Newgate, and to tell me I was to be carried to Scotland, which I could put no other construction upon, than that I was designed to be destroyed there without law, when by all the laws of England, in which I had lived since the year 1655, I could not in the least be affected; so, from the time of his Grace's coming to me in the fore-mentioned place, I never so much as saw him, save once *en passant* near the Privy Gardens, and at this honourable board on Thursday last.

"So that what I do now lay before the most honourable Lords of Her Majesty's Council is neither in acknowledgment of favour received from the Duke of Athole, and much less in revenge against the Duke of Queensberrie, for having done me discourtesies, from whom, as I never met with any, so, to the best of my remembrance, I did never see him,

unless at this table, when I was commanded a few days ago to attend here; but the only motives on which I do make this discovery are the preserving of the safety and honour of Her Majesty, the preventing these discontents which this might produce in the minds of most of Her Majesty's subjects, especially those of Scotland, and for covering the lives of many innocent, as well as of divers very eminent, men."

On the same day (the 27th December) he handed in a declaration in which he said he had put in writing not only what he had omitted in his former declaration on Thursday, but all else he had been able to recollect, "as there is nothing on which I will more value myself than setting this affair in its true and full light."

The letter which Lovat wrote to Ferguson ran thus:—

"TO MR. RALPHSON, AT LONDON.

"SIR,—I received the honour of yours of the 26th of November, for which I give you my hearty thanks. I met with such hindrances here, that I could not begin my journey as yet to my garrison, and the roads are so full of parties that it is a most dangerous attempt. I resolve to venture it tomorrow or next day. You may be assured that I will do you all the justice imaginable with our general and superior officers. I will be sure to lay your demands before them in the most advantageous terms I can, yet I could wish I had something material from you to tell them; for what you told me of the public proceedings of Parliament is in the printed votes and gazettes, which they have by every post, for one of my friends here sends it punctually. So I would be thought very barren, if I have no more information from you to give them than what is in the public papers. As to what you writ me of my taking care of being transported to particular resentments in prejudice of my

General's interest, I do assure you that you need not be afraid of it, for I always did and will prefer my honour and my superior's interest to my own private concerns; but I know most certainly that those you call my enemies, as well as those you call my friends, have equally a dislike to my General, and that they will both serve him at the same time, that is, never till they are forced to it; and as I do design to give a real account to those you call my friends, that is, that my General need expect no favour from them; so I would wish that you and all those that are his good friends might not be deluded by the sneaking pretences of those who have no other end or design than to make a party in the C. army, to force pensions and places from the Government.—I am, Sir, your affectionate humble Servant,

“JOHN SMEATON.

“ROTTERDAM, Dec. 14, 1703.”

Ferguson, however, was not free from danger himself. His Jacobitism was notorious, and some statements were made to Government which gave some substance to the idea that there was a real plot in existence, and that he had gone the length of complicity in it. One Sir Thomas Stewart, in particular, made assertions which afford a foundation for Tindal's statement that there was matter of treason sworn against him. He declared that Ferguson knew that Lovat was an accredited agent from the French and exiled Courts, and that as such he had corresponded with him, and conferred about a rising in the Highlands. He affirmed that “Mr. Ferguson did regret that the Court of St. Germain, or any person there, should have had any hand in reposing such a trust in so ill a man as Fraser; and when it was suggested to him that such a treacherous conduct should be made known to the Courts of France, he answered that care would be taken for so doing, or words to

this effect and purpose." Stewart also asserted that, in the winter of 1702-3, certain letters passed between Sir John Maclean and Sir Æneas Macpherson, the contents of which it was feared might prove hurtful to the interest of the Court of St. Germain, and "it had been insinuated to Mr. Ferguson that advice thereof might be sent there, but with great caution, and Mr. Ferguson did answer that notice accordingly should be sent thither, or words to that effect."

Keith also testified that on one occasion Fraser had said to him: "Who do you think was with me yesterday but Ferguson?—who entertained me with a long story of politics, the sum of which was that the Duke of Marlborough and my Lord Treasurer knew everything that passed at St. Germain, by a correspondence with the Duke of Berwick, of whom (meaning the Duke of Berwick) Ferguson told me he knew as much as could take off his head in France, but would tell me nothing of particulars." And Clarke said that Ferguson read Fraser's letter to him, that he had sent a letter from himself, one from Campbell, and one from Ferguson to Fraser, and that he had met Ferguson and Campbell twice at the Vine Tavern in Holborn, but would not own what was said there.

Campbell of Glendaruel also made some interesting revelations, in which Ferguson's name occurs. He said: "I saw Mr. Ferguson with Fraser once; when I came into the room, Ferguson got up and made an end of a discourse he had with Fraser, telling how much he repented his former way of living, and being concerned against the royal family, which is all I could make of what he discoursed, and so he went his way. Fraser told me he did not trust him, for tho' he had a pension from St. Germain, yet he might have one from the Queen and Government here, for aught he knew; so he did not trust the secrets of his affairs to him, as he said, but sent for him to know what was passing here in

town, for that he was very intelligent; this is all he told me concerning Ferguson." He also mentioned that among the letters which came from Lovat was one addressed to Ferguson in the name of Smith, and, being re-examined on a subsequent occasion, gave the following additional information: "That after he had been examined about the pass, he thought it necessary to see Ferguson, with whom Fraser had advised him to consult on all occasions, as being very intelligent, tho' he cautioned him not to trust him too far, because, he said, he knew he had a pension from St. Germain, and he did not know but he might have a pension from the Court here. Thereupon he spoke to Clarke to appoint Ferguson to meet him at the Vine Tavern in Holborn, in order to advise with him how he was to act upon the present occasion.

"Accordingly Campbell, Clarke, and Ferguson met at that place, and Ferguson told Campbell he would certainly be re-examined and put into custody, and therefore bid him take care of himself, for, if he was brought to a trial, Ferguson thought he would be in a very great hazard. Campbell understood the meaning of his discourse to be that it was advisable for him to get out of the way, and thereupon he said he did not apprehend the danger to be so great as Ferguson expressed it. Ferguson told Clarke also that he would be put into custody. Clarke made answer that he had a family, and would abide by it.

"Ferguson said it was discoursed that Fraser was gone into France as a spy for the Duke of Queensberry; and, if that was so, Fraser would be certainly put into the Bastille; and then he proceeded to insinuate to Campbell that it was his wisest way to strike in with the Duke of Athole, for that Fraser being a spy for the Duke of Queensberry, and the Duke of Queensberry not so well affected to the interest of St. Germain as the Duke of Athole was, it would be

better for him to join with Athole. Campbell said he could not remember his very words, but that he expressed himself in such a manner that he found that to be his meaning, and that nothing else could be understood by what he said. He said the Duke of Athole was more truly engaged to that interest they were engaged in than the Duke of Queensberry was.

“Campbell told Ferguson that he was upon too ill terms with the Duke of Athole to comply with that, and that if the Duke of Athole sent for him he would not go to him.

“Campbell said Ferguson, Clarke, and he met at the Vine twice, and their discourse was to the same effect both times.”

But the most curious of all the papers is the account of Ferguson's own examination, and of how he was confronted with the principal witness against him. Before, however, noticing it, it is desirable to note a passage from the Earl of Nottingham's narrative of the results of his examination into the plot, which supplements it. Nottingham mentions that “Mr. Ferguson denied he ever had any discourse about the Duke of Marlborough, denied he ever saw Captain John Murray, or knows anything of David Lindsay. That he asked nothing of Simon Fraser, but Fraser said he would do him justice: to which Ferguson made no reply. He advised Fraser to do nothing through pique against King James's interest. He owns that he heard Clarke say at the Vine Tavern, that if Fraser was not true to the King's interest, he would never trust any man, or words to that effect.”

The document which contains the account of Ferguson's examination is headed “Sir Thomas Stewart's and Mr. Ferguson's examinations.” After mentioning that Sir Thomas “made great difficulties of saying anything at first,” it goes on to state that—

“He said he had been acquainted with Major Boucher

about twelve months, with Ferguson since the year 1692, and with Jackson for some time.

“He said he was very confident that if he was confronted with Ferguson, Ferguson would own all that he should charge him with; and, on the other hand, if he did not, then Sir Thomas said he would make no further difficulty of declaring his knowledge.

“Mr. Ferguson was thereupon sent for, and examined first alone as to what correspondence he had with Fraser, and others concerned in the conspiracy.

“Ferguson referred himself to what he had said in his narratives to the Cabinet Council.

“He was told no notice would be taken of these narratives, but it was expected he should give an account what correspondence he kept in France: he denied he kept any. Being asked if he had not wrote to Fraser? he said Fraser was then in Holland, not in France.

“He said Clarke, who brought Fraser's letter to him, would not deliver it to him, nor tell him from whom it came, nor how to direct an answer, unless he would first promise to write to the person, which at last he did: because, as he said, he was desirous to know the manner of the corresponding in order to discover it to the Duke of Athole, being sensible that there was some design against the Queen or some other person on foot.

“He said, as soon as he knew how this correspondence was, he sent one Mr. Mason to the Duke of Athole with an account of it.

“Ferguson said he saw Fraser but once, and then Fraser told him he had been introduced to St. Germain's; but Ferguson said he had forgot by whom.

“He said he saw Campbell twice, and advised him to tell all he knew.

“Being asked (if he meant the preservation of the Queen

and Government by what he did) why did he not stop Fraser while he was here ?

“ He made answer, It would have signified little, and he did not suspect him till he was conveyed away by a pass in a sham name. Being thereupon told that he had owned before that he knew this pass was obtained for him by a Secretary of State for Scotland, and being thereupon asked how he came to think ill of Fraser upon that account, or to suspect the pass was not given by the privity of the English Secretary ?

“ He only made answer, That about a week after Fraser was gone, he knew the English Secretary was not acquainted with it.

“ Ferguson affirmed that Fraser never told him of any commissions he had from France or to Scotland, and that they never had any discourse together about correspondence between France and Scotland, nor of any designs of insurrections in the Highlands or in any other place, but he pretended that Fraser said that he was under the protection of the Duke of Queensberry, but said nothing of his other business.

“ He said he never had but one letter from Fraser. Being asked if he had not seen another letter that was intended for him, he said, he thought he had.

“ Thereupon a copy of a letter directed to ‘ Ralphson ’ was produced, and being asked the meaning of the expression in that letter, ‘ That he must begin his journey to his garrison, ’ he said, he supposed it meant St. Germain.

“ Being asked what was meant by General? he said, he supposed the Prince of Wales was meant ; but he never made any use of that expression to Fraser.

“ Being asked what was meant by the expression, ‘ That he would lay Ferguson’s demands before them in the most advantageous terms he could ’ ? he pretended not to know,

unless Fraser meant to involve him in a supposed guilt; and he thought that men's lives and liberties did not depend upon construction and supposition.

"That part of the letter being read wherein Fraser took notice of the advice which Ferguson had written to him, 'Not to be transported to particular resentments in prejudice of his General's interest' ? he denied he had said anything in his letter that might give occasion for Fraser to write to that purpose.

"Being asked if he knew Captain Meers, he said, 'Yes,' and that he called to see him the day after he had delivered himself to the Secretary. Being asked, if he did not see him before he surrendered himself? (which Sir Thomas Stewart had affirmed), he said he could not tell, but he was sure if he had he persuaded him to surrender himself. He said Meers advised with him if he could not have the benefit of the indemnity in Scotland without going thither; and Ferguson told him he could not.

"Being asked if he had not endeavoured to procure a pardon for Clarke (which was also mentioned by Sir Thomas Stewart), he said Clarke was a poor weak creature, and, as he believed, did not know the danger of these things: and therefore having made use of him to get light into the correspondence, he thought it became him to endeavour to get his pardon. For his part, he did not inquire into Clarke's principles.

"He owned he knew Jackson and Boucher; Jackson he met at the Coffee-house. Boucher was his near neighbour, but he never talked with them about business.

"Ferguson refusing to own anything, Sir Thomas Stewart was sent for to confront him, according to his own proposal. Sir Thomas, when called in, put Ferguson in mind, that he had said he had been a great rebel, but never a traitor, and advised him to persist in that resolution in respect to the Queen by telling his knowledge.

“Sir Thomas Stewart then said to the effect of what is set down in his paper relating to Sir John Maclean’s letter to Sir Æneas Macpherson, and what Ferguson had said thereupon as to giving notice of it at St. Germain. Ferguson, at first said he remembered nothing of it: afterwards he said he might perhaps say that it was likely care would be taken to give notice of it at St. Germain.

“Ferguson owned he believed he might tell Sir Thomas Stewart that he had procured letters of Fraser to be taken, and that he had informed the Lord Nottingham where papers were lodged, and that by his means these papers were seized.

“He said he believed he might tell Sir Thomas Stewart that it was odd to let Fraser go about with a commission from King James in one hand, and the First Minister’s pass in the other: so that he made use of the pass to carry him from one place to another in order to make use of the commission to inveigle people.

“Upon this Sir Thomas Stewart fell into great compliments to Ferguson, in order to prevail with him to be ingenuous: he put Ferguson in mind of his having often said that, if King James came back, he would put a rope about his neck, and fall down at his feet to ask his pardon, and advised him now that they two should join and both fall down in the same manner at the Queen’s feet, and beg her pardon, and deserve it by an ingenuous confession; but Ferguson being too obstinate to be prevailed upon, and Sir Thomas Stewart only proceeding in the same way, and declining to say further what he knew of Ferguson, which he had before said he would say to his face, they were both sent away, and Sir Thomas Stewart was ordered to set down in writing what he had more to say relating to the conspiracy; which he afterwards did, and is contained in his paper.”

The scene must have been an amusing one, when Sir

Thomas "fell into great compliments," and let out Ferguson's intention of following the example of the citizens of Calais; but the Plotter had been too often in worse situations than he was then, to run his neck into a metaphorical rope, which might prove an actual one. There is a "touch of classical obscurity" about his felicitation of himself on the fact that he "had been a great rebel but never was a traitor;" but it probably means that, though the particular steps by which he sought to further the political causes he adopted may have been involved in mystery, yet the general tenor of his opinions was avowed and notorious. There had been defiance and not deception in his attitude to the Government of the Stuarts, and his worst opponents declare that after the Revolution he had turned "so openly Jacobite," that no one could possibly have a doubt of his sentiments.

His answers to the questions put to him on this occasion manifest "the talent for saving himself in all plots" of which Dalrymple speaks, and his whole conduct in the episode equally bears witness to his faculty "for serving his party." Luttrell notes, upon the 30th December, that "Mr. Ferguson was the other day summoned to attend the Secretary of State about the plot, but, nothing being proved against him, was dismissed." He had, however, made himself obnoxious to another power in the State, and ere long the vengeance of the Whig majority in the House of Lords vented itself upon him.

The plot, as we have seen, was regarded with very different feelings by the two Houses of Parliament, and by the two great parties in the State. The Tories were content to leave the matter in the hands of the Ministry, but the Whig view was that all possible endeavours were being used to hush up and stifle the conspiracy, and that Athole and other accused persons were privately countenanced by Nottingham. Severe reflections were made upon that Minister and his narrative in the House of Lords, when the papers

were laid before Parliament; but the House of Commons took up the gauntlet in his defence, and retorted with a resolution, passed by a large majority, to the effect that he, "for his great ability and diligence in the exercise of his office, for his unquestionable fidelity to the Queen and her Government, and for his steady adhering to the Church of England as by law established, had highly merited the trust Her Majesty had reposed in him;" and, after consideration of the papers, they passed no judgment upon them, but thanked the Queen for communicating them, declaring that they were "abundantly satisfied in Her Majesty's wise conduct and great care of her people." The House of Lords, on the contrary, went at it with zeal. An attack which the Whigs in the Upper Chamber made upon the Secretary miscarried; but Luttrell notes, on 10th March, that "The Committee of seven Lords sits daily at Northumberland House." Among the animadversions to which Nottingham had been subjected was "his giving ear to the information of Ferguson;" and this entry occurs on the 10th of February in Luttrell's diary: "Among the papers relating to the Scotch Plot one was wrote by Ferguson about setting up the Prince of Wales after the death of Her Majesty in that kingdom, upon which he is taken into custody by the order of the House of Lords, and the further proceedings in these papers adjourned till Monday."

Again, on the 15th, he notes: "They have ordered Ferguson to be kept close prisoner, without pen, ink, or paper." And on the 22d March: "The Lords ordered a prosecution against Ferguson, in custody of the Black Rod."

The Commons declined to regard with equanimity the view of their functions which the Lords had taken in conducting a judicial investigation by means of a Committee of their number, and again addressed the Queen, praying her to

resume her prerogative, which was being thus violated. The final result of the activity of the Lords was their coming to the conclusion that there had been dangerous plots, which had been encouraged by the failure to settle the succession to the throne of Scotland in the House of Hanover; to which the Queen replied that "She had some time since declared her intention of commending the settlement of the Protestant succession in Scotland to her servants of that kingdom as the most effectual means for securing their quiet and our own, and the readiest way to the entire union between both kingdoms, in the perfecting of which it was very desirable no time should be lost."

Of the Jacobites who had been arrested, two, Lindsay and Boucher, were convicted before the regular tribunals; but both escaped the penalty of the law, for Boucher received mercy on account of the kindness he proved he had rendered to English prisoners in Flanders, and Lindsay died in prison. But the "leading man" among the Jacobites, who had taken the sting out of the plot as a weapon in the hands of party, and who was too wary to be caught by the ordinary law, was specially dealt with by an august assembly. "Saturday night," says Luttrell, on Tuesday, March 28th, 1704, "the Lords sat late on Ferguson's narrative of the Scots Plot, and resolved, — 'That his two papers, dated 24th and 27th December last, and by him delivered to the Cabinet Council, are false, scandalous, and seditious: contrived to stifle the conspiracy; tending to create an ill opinion in Her Majesty of her good subjects; and to promote the interest of the pretended Prince of Wales.'

"Yeas, 40. Noes, 38.

"That the not passing a censure on the author of the said papers, nor ordering him to be taken into custody, or prosecuted for the same before they were laid before this House, is a great encouragement to Her Majesty's enemies,

and of dangerous consequence to her Government and Protestant succession as established by law.

“Yeas, 41. Noes, 36.

“Ordered, that he be committed to Newgate, and the Attorney-General to prosecute him for treasonable practices, and give them an account of it the first week of the next session of Parliament.”

Tindal, after noticing this resolution, adds: “But Ferguson never received the least punishment.” Luttrell, however, notes again, on the 17th of June, after mentioning some other names, that “Ferguson was also in Court (that of Queen’s Bench), and ordered to be try’d next term for misprision of treason, in designing to dethrone the Queen, it appearing he has been twenty-five years a pensioner to the French King.” From what it so appeared is not evident, and it is extremely improbable that in pre-Revolution days he should have been, like Algernon Sidney, in receipt of French money. It would seem, from a letter preserved among the Cromarty Papers, that there was some intention of sending him down to Scotland, or a desire there to get him sent down; for, on 27th July 1704, Alexander Wedderburn, writing to George, Earl of Cromarty, said:—

“I went to the Treasurer at Windsor, and spoke both to the papers and the sending of the persons named in your memoranda to me. As to the papers, he said I had best send those I could get, that is, extracts from the clerks of the House of Lords. Without the witnesses were sent down I know little use these would serve for, and therefore I have delayed asking them till I see what comes of the other, or that I get new directions about it. All that I have been told yet in relation to the persons is that the Queen is desirous they should go, and such as want pardons shall only have them upon that condition; but that by the law they cannot be forced out of the kingdom, and some of them

upon particular reasons. Mr. Ferguson is under triall here, and it were a carying him away from justice."

But if on this occasion Ferguson had been sent to Scotland, the result might have been more to his advantage than it would likely have proved on either of the previous occasions, in the reign of William, when the same procedure was contemplated; for the proceedings of the House of Lords had added new fuel to the flame of Scottish patriotism, and as their victim he might have found himself a national hero. The Estates, indeed, went so far as to pass a resolution denouncing the interference of the English Upper Chamber; and an address to her Majesty, regretting that such an encroachment had occurred upon her prerogative as Queen of Scotland, and humbly requesting that in her wisdom she would take such measures as might prevent the like meddling for the future.

The shadow of a prosecution seems to have hung over the Plotter during the whole of the eventful summer in which the power of the Grand Monarch was shaken to its base, and the house of Austria saved from ruin by the valour of the British arms. While his brother, the Brigadier, was in the thick of the fight at Schellenberg, and sharing in the glories of Blenheim—being classed by Oldmixon among those "whose names ought to live with honour as long as history can preserve them"—Robert Ferguson was out on bail. In the spring of the following year, on 26th April 1705, Luttrell again alludes to him: "Yesterday being the first day of the term, Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Tutchin appeared in the Court of Queen's Bench upon their recognisances." Two months later he seems to have been his own master; for, on 5th June 1705, John Mackenzie, writing from London to the Earl of Cromarty, says: "We are in suspense about elections, tho' R. Ferguson told me this morning that he doubted not but the Church would have a superiority.

The "Scots" or "Queensberry Plot" was apparently the last in which this veteran conspirator was engaged. For the decade of life that still remained to him, he occupied himself rather with political writing than in practising sedition.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1706-1712.

LATER WRITINGS.

IN the year 1706 there was published "The History of the Revolution, by Robert Ferguson," reprinted in 1717. The main contention he seeks to establish is that, instead of being an effort in favour of the Protestant religion and civil liberty, the inception and carrying out of the Revolution was a deep and successful design of the Vatican for the advancement of Popery throughout the whole of Europe.¹ Nor, when one reads the treatise, does the theory appear so absurd as on the first blush it seems. There is a *substratum* of fact to support some of his arguments, and when to that is added the influence of the reports and rumours of the day, it is quite possible to realise how a man of strong views, deeply disappointed with those with whom he had for long acted, and reconciled to some to whom he had been hitherto

¹ On this little treatise Dr. John Hill Burton has the following remarks:— "The object of this is to prove that William of Orange was an accomplished and unscrupulous agent of the Jesuits, and that the Revolution was a bold stroke for the ultimate furtherance of the Church of Rome. It must be remembered that in taking the measure of the probabilities and improbabilities in this, as in other specimens of the prophetic literature of the day, we have had now nearly 200 years of experience on the question whether the Revolution has furthered Romanism. Taking this little book with a future open to all anticipations of reaction, and taking a few small statements at the beginning as true, we have a very wonderful piece of ingenious manipulation of probable cause and effect, that might vie with any of the efforts of ingenious men to show what rhetoric, and a dexterous management of formal logic can do in support of some palpable paradox. Ferguson's achievement is indeed more complete than theirs, for he writes not to astonish but to convince. This little book might be a good study to the vindictory school of historical critics."

opposed, should see, in some of the proceedings of his *quondam* friends, evidence that they were playing into the hands of the mighty ecclesiastical organisation, which, amid all his vicissitudes, he had constantly regarded with apprehension and aversion. The Preface sets out with the declaration : " The defence of religion, when real, was always mingled with a candour and meekness becoming the character of a Christian, naked simplicity still conquering bullying, mistaken zeal, and truth triumphing over fraudulent artifice. But when the defence is pretended, it ever serves as a cloak for sacrilege and treason, and ushers in the sad train of circumstances which seldom fail to attend it. The preservation of the Church of England was our only care, and the intrusion of Popery our daily fear. These apprehensions were so industriously improved by the Romish factors, that they carried on their design of introducing Popery by railing at it, and the more they talked against it, the more it gained ground."

Referring to the great Civil War, he says : " These scenes of horror were the projects of that grand *Theolog-politico* and *arch-Machiavellian*, Cardinal Richelieu, who, by the assistance of the Jesuits, blew up inconsiderable trifles and misunderstandings in Scotland into an open war, fomented the horrid rebellion in Ireland, and ratify'd an unnatural war in England ; bewitching the people with this Jesuitical sophistry, ' That they might fight against the natural person of their Prince to defend his political ; ' till at last, by the help of these juggling distinctions, they actually divided his soul from his body. The Cardinal died in 1642, and at his death he left instructions to Cardinal Mazarin, who succeeded him in his Ministry, to pursue the same method of keeping the Government of Great Britain divided. How successfully these plots have been carried on, these nations by sad experience have felt ; and thus the priests and

Jesuits have made our sectaries their tools, possessing them with such wild notions of Libertinism that nothing could restrain them. . . . My design . . . is only to show how upon the same foot they have since carried on the same design, making use of the same methods to accomplish the same end; but only with this difference, that whereas they promoted a rebellion in 1640 against a zealous Protestant Prince in the person of King Charles I., who was a strict enemy to Popery, and utterly unlike to serve their purposes, here they undertook the deposing a prince of their own Church, because he would not support the supremacy of the Pope, which all Catholic princes but himself and the King of France owned. . . .

“ How far I may be exposed to censure for this undertaking by some, I easily apprehend. I shall only say this in my own defence, and leave the rest to the candid reader to interpret; that as I have had the honour to be baptized into the Church of England; and, by the gracious goodness of God, have continued a constant, though unworthy, member of the same, I thought it my duty to offer the best of my endeavours to discover her enemy, and warn her of approaching danger.”

The history itself sets out with the reflection: “ Few people at first knew the reason of these black reports of the pretended Irish Massacre, consecrated gridirons, Protestant bridles, etc., and now we have too fatally experienced the effects they have had upon the nation; and our too fond credulity in believing every flying report hath proved the source of all our misfortunes. This unhappy temper of the nation answered the politicians’ end, which as greedily swallowed all the calumny, and imbibed the prejudice, as the managers could desire. But what stratagems and devices, what ways and means, will not disaffected persons find out to blacken a Government they have a mind to

overthrow." The argument is then advanced that the events of King James's reign showed how impossible it was for him to force Popery on the nation. "His management would certainly (if we had suffered him) for ever have ruined it in England. He was suspected; the nation were upon their guard against any attempts or even looks that way. Rome saw that he would never do their business, and his plain dealing as to their religion was quite against their politicks and maxims, and much blamed by the Conclave. They knew that England would bear anything, even Popery itself, by way of opposition to Popery: that the English are carried away with violent passions, and follow the cry that is set up, without considering till they are out of breath: that they believe everything they hear and nothing they see." He comments on the general alarm in England of massacre from 3500 disbanded Irish, while there was no apprehension from double that number of foreign Papists who came over with the Prince of Orange, and points out how King James's attempt to take off the Penal Laws set the nation in a flame, but not King William's actually doing it; and how differently the vacant sees were regarded before the Revolution from the rooting out of Episcopacy in Scotland afterwards. He touches at some length on the quarrel between Rome and the Gallican Church and monarchy of France. "The preserving of the Protestant religion is, I think, the most impudent banter that ever was imposed upon the understanding of a whole nation. . . . It is ridiculous to think that Innocent XI., the original projector of the whole confederacy; the Elector Palatine and Prince of Orange, chief managers; the Emperor, King of Spain, Electors of Bavaria and Cologne, abettors and assistants, should embark in a war against France for the preservation of the Protestant religion." If it was so, why "not interpose with their confederate, the Emperor, for some lenity and favour to his

Protestant subjects in Hungary," and "their other ally, the King of Spain, for abolishing the Inquisition, and dissuade him from making bonfires of his subjects whenever any of them turned Protestants," or with the Duke of Savoy, on behalf of his "persecuted subjects, the Vaudois." "That King James," he says, "by gentle persuasions, would have insinuated his religion, I believe; but that he ever intended to do it by force, I do not believe to have been either in his inclination or his power. It was a frequent expression of his, 'That conscience in point of religion ought to be free.'" And in support of this he instances his conduct towards the Huguenot refugees, whose requital of it suggests again the solemn phrase which we have seen him use on a previous occasion—"Natural subjects have, without being wondered, flown in the faces of their lawful kings; but strangers and refugees used to receive a deeper impression by royal bounty and munificence. They indeed Hosannah'd him at first, but many of them in a little time were forwardest to cry, Crucify him, and, contrary to all the measures of discretion and gratitude, they were the warmest inflamers of his misfortunes, and, in great numbers, took arms to oppose him." After mentioning other facts in support of this contention, he says: "Had we dealt with the Church of Rome as our forefathers did, when our kings were Catholic too, we had checked her Bishop's exorbitancy without any encroachments upon the regal dignity." The rights claimed in England and France, even previous to the Reformation, were, he says, "1, To retain the ancient canonical discipline; 2, The power to examine whether new laws, that should be made, were expedient, and to reject those which they found to be otherwise. These are the lawful privileges of every National Church, and these France, as well as England, has asserted. These are what they call the Liberties of the Gallican Church." After a short historical sketch, he asserts

that, just before the Revolution, there were the beginnings of a Reformation in France, for Louis had gone further in resistance to the Pope than Henry VIII. "The Pope then, seeing the axe thus fairly laid at the root of his supremacy, infallibility, resolved to hazard his all to defend it, for indeed his all depended upon it." After noticing further phases of the contest between Gaul and Rome, he remarks upon the cold reception which was given to the Earl of Castlemaine, James's representative at the Papal Court, so contrary to the belief "that nothing less than a jubilee could be at Rome for the conversion of an English king." He then comments fully upon an idea, for which there was some foundation in reports, that William himself had secretly conformed to the Catholic Church, and contrasts the treatment which Burnet, who had just come from the Stadtholder's Court, met with at Rome, with that accorded to the English envoy. The next step was to remove the Duke of Monmouth, who stood in William's way. "He was the only deliverer in view, and so long as this idol of the populace was in being, it was impossible for the Pope to make use of his engine, the Prince of Orange." Then follows a statement, important as coming from one who had had such good opportunities of knowing what he now spoke about: "Therefore, to remove this impediment, there was all the underhand encouragement given to prepare for an invasion of England." He asserts that Monmouth, before his execution, had almost discovered something of what he had learned in Holland, when the Earl of Sunderland, who was deeply engaged in the intrigue, prevented it; and traces various other steps that brought about the Revolution. Observing that people might inquire how those who most contributed to it—Sunderland, Count Dada, and Father Petre—got off safely when the crash came, he remarks of the first of these: "I will not affirm, whether in St. Martin's or elsewhere, the

Earl of Sunderland for some time lay concealed; but a certain gentleman who now awkwardly manages a high post in the Church, can inform the reader that (false and perfidious as he was to his God and King) he was a very grateful guest to him, in putting a mitre upon so unworthy a head, and a crosier into so clumsy a hand." After commenting upon the attitude of the new *régime* towards Episcopacy in Scotland and England, and referring, in passing, to the massacre of Glencoe, he points out how Louis was obliged to concentrate the energies of France against the confederacy, by submitting to Rome in the ecclesiastical controversy, touches on the favour shown to individual Romanists, and declares that "thus both at home and abroad, thro' England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Popery hath gained ground by the Revolution—the Papal supremacy re-established in France, Episcopacy abolished in Scotland, divided in England, and a mere cypher in Ireland."

Referring, in passing, to the case of some gentlemen who had been detained in Newgate for ten years, and enlarging on the favour shown by the law of England to liberty, he remarks: "But the Parliament made several Acts to continue the gentlemen longer, and I do not dispute their authority, but hope hints of mercy may be thought worthy consideration; and when that part of the Litany is read, which recommends prisoners to the mercy of God, it may not be an offence to offer it to the consideration of man."

"We never," he says in conclusion, "so much as heard any mention of England, or the Protestant religion, in any of their articles or resolutions (*i.e.* of the confederacy), but to pluck down the exorbitant power of France, to defend Holy Church and See, and reduce that rebel prince to his obedience to Holy Father the Pope. These things were rung in our ears, and were the sole aim of this holy war, tho' the preservation of the Church of England was the

pretence, and the liberties and properties of the people the cloak for it." And, adding some animadversions upon King William's promoting "so many known enemies of the Church of England," he ends with the warning: "No vigorous attack or design, no heat or fury, is now owned in open view, but, under the mask of moderation, all the mischief imaginable is intended. Thus in them is fury zeal, and indifferency moderation. May that Providence which has hitherto preserved her, make her worthy its protection, and still keep her from those wolves in sheep's clothing who are still seeking to devour her."

The great Tory triumph at the polls in 1710 inspired Ferguson again to take up the pen, and address at the same time a friend in high office and the British public, at great length, on the general policy of statesmen, and the pressing politics of the hour. He had dedicated a previous publication to Harley, and the ex-Speaker of the Commons and grave leader of the Tories was now Prime Minister. The future Earl of Oxford seems to have succeeded to the place in the Plotter's regard that had been held in turn by Dr. Owen, by Shaftesbury, by Monmouth, and by the exiled King; and the succession of these names calls up at once totally different phases of English life and history. In all, the Plotter had been thoroughly conversant with the drift of the popular mind: he had never lost his grasp of the situation; and we again find the name of a very prominent figure in the public life of the time associated with a treatise which embodies the political knowledge and views of his later years, as the declaration read at Lyme had sketched the outlines of the constitution his earlier imagination had figured as the best. He now published a work which bore the rather pretentious title: "Of the qualifications requisite in a Minister of State, containing a modest representation of what counsels it may be fit for a person in

that station to lay before his sovereign at this conjuncture." It was in three parts, and the first of these bore on the title-page three mottoes from classical authors:—

"Ita versemur in Republica, ut credamus, esse rem publicam."

Plin. in Panegyrico.

"Nullum majus boni Imperii instrumentum, quam bonus amicus."—Tacit. Historiæ, lib. 4.

"Rebusque turbatis malum extremum discordia accessit."

Id. ibid.

It was dedicated to "the Honourable Robert Harley, Esq., one of Her Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, and a Commissioner of the Treasury, etc.," with the explanation "that whatsoever is, either in this part or in those which are to follow, offered, with the profoundest submission to your Honour, is not in the least designed for the instructing any in the present Ministry as to what their characters may oblige them unto; but that, next to the commending Her Majesty's wisdom in her choosing and advancing persons of their intellectual and moral, as well as political and civil, accomplishments to those posts of dignity and confidence, I do thereby intend the giving these nations that opinion, with respect to your own behaviour in the said capacity, which is no less firmly believed than it is most sincerely prayed for by, may it please your Honour, your most dutiful and most obedient Servant, R. F."

He starts by advancing as a premise, that a First Minister ought not only to be a person of good sense and a solid judgment, "and, as Moses phraseth it, wise and understanding," thoroughly instructed in the constitution and nature of the Government, concerning the interest of the kingdom and genius of the people, and by what laws they are and ought to be governed, and what are the inclinations and dispositions of the nobility and superior gentry,

but also "somewhat acquainted with the general balance of Europe, and with the fort and foible of the several Princes and States who have dominions in it, and especially to be well informed about all that can be understood and known concerning those with whom we either are in war, neutrality, or alliance." If he have these endowments it will not be necessary that "he should be an universal scholar. For though learning be of very good use, provided a wise man have the keeping and managing of it, yet it is not only unnecessary, but a dangerous furniture, when it falls to the share of one who is imprudent. So that it is come even to be a proverb, that 'the greatest clerk is not always the wisest man,' and that 'an ounce of mother wit is worth a pound of clergy.' . . . He who is a mere pedant doth in all companies into which he cometh render himself ridiculous by his impertinencies, and the trappings of learning with which he is rigged out do only serve to point him forth for the more remarkable cockscomb. But especially, if he who goes into society in a garb of literature, stitched up of a thousand pieces of different sizes and colours, proveth to be a factious clergyman, his fellowship and conversation will not only be ludicrous, but must prove mischievous. Seeing then, you must reckon to have the most innocent matters of State transformed and metamorphosed into important cases of conscience, and such affairs as relate merely to civil policy wrested into articles affecting the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, and subversive of the principles of practical godliness—of which, besides the instance of the French Lidgue, we have had woful confirmations thereof among ourselves. Nor is there anything more usual than to find your learned bigots pretending national transactions to have been bottomed upon a zeal for, and justified by, the Gospel; when, as they had their rise and original from mere secular motives, so they were in their issue made subservient

to ends far enough remote from the concernments of religion. . . . If a Minister knows the trade and employment belonging to a public civil Minister," it is not needful that he should be either "a great linguist, a nimble philosopher, or a profound divine." Ferguson then proceeds to discuss at some length, with his usual fertility of classical illustration and scriptural precedent, certain qualities which ought to be conspicuous in one who rules a realm. The first of these is that he ought to be "sincerely religious," though this does not mean that "his religion should either resemble that of a bigot, or hold always pace with his of the ecclesiastical gown." "With the interior piety and with the external devotion of an upright Christian, he should always preserve the honour, moderation, meekness, and good breeding of a gentleman, without either espousing the dogmaticalness and narrow preciseness of such as are bred for the altar, or running into the extravagancy of a factionist, whom a fancy of being esteemed orthodox and zealous hath rendered furious and mad."

This leads him to reflections upon the relations of Church and State, in the heated circumstances of the time; and he insists upon the independent position of the former, in language which might have been used by a Scottish Free Churchman of 1843, and which it is very curious to find addressed to the Premier of the Ministry that passed the Patronage Act of 1712, the very statute that a century and a quarter later raised the whole question of Church and State in Scotland, and brought about the disruption of the Scottish Kirk. "The Church being a Society instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, independent upon all civil powers whatsoever, it is thereupon the indispensable duty of every one entrusted to give counsel to princes, to advise them herein to kiss the son, (as the phrase is, Ps. ii. 12), that is, to be obedient to Him in that solemn appointment and

ordinance of His, and to take care of making any invasion upon any of those essential and intrinsical rights which He, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, hath conferred upon and invested His Church with, as it is a corporation separated and distinct from the world. So that from thence, and upon that basis and foot, its officers in all their kinds and degrees, its worship in all the several parts thereof, its authority for admitting and directing members, and for the administration of discipline over all those who belong to the said society, are privileges and prerogatives so unalienably settled upon the Church, that none clothed with earthly jurisdictions, can break in upon and infringe them without the rendering themselves obnoxious to His wrath, under which they cannot avoid perishing in case it kindleth but a little." After dealing carefully with the position of the Church of England, warmly defending the union of Church and State, and arguing that religious endowments ought to be scrupulously respected, because to tamper with them not only endangers the security of all property, but is sacrilege as well as robbery, he proceeds to give some advice in regard to "the other great Litigant party in these nations about religion," which, had it been possible to act more in its spirit, might have had very beneficial effects on the fortunes of the country. It is that, "as the Minister would not himself upon any motives whatsoever give advice to his Sovereign for the reclaiming, cancelling, and abrogating of the liberty which hath by law been granted to the Dissenters; so that he would neither by his silence, nor without his making the most strenuous opposition he can, give way to such a counsel, and much less consent unto it and acquiesce in it in case it should be proposed to Her Majesty, and come to be debated before her at the Council Board." He maintains that "Dissenters ought not to be debarred from serving their Sovereign" in lucrative and gainful offices and employments, and high

positions; and as to one of the burning questions of the time, that of "Occasional Conformity," he declares "he never could bring himself to believe that the sacramental test was right," and truly remarks: "As to Dissenters, their receiving the sacrament by way of occasional communion with the Church of England, instead of deserving to be held for a test and proof for their being qualified to serve the Government in trusts and offices, it should be accounted a marking them out for the most unfit and unworthy of all persons to be relied upon by the Sovereign, in that it cannot reasonably be expected that such who, in order to the getting of a place, can be false to God, should ever prove faithful to their Prince in the discharge and execution of it." He concludes his observations on religious matters by representing his "very inward thoughts and most ardent wishes," that no oath of loyalty and fidelity be imposed, which should not in the fullest manner recognise the controlling Sovereignty of God over all the affairs of Kings and States.

The second qualification which he postulates for the Minister is that he should be a "man of truth—that is, of great veracity." The saying of Louis XII. of France is quoted, that "If truth were lost in the world, it ought to be found in the word of a King;" and the author observes that "it is much worse than a perversion and abuse of language to call him who is false and treacherous to his Prince an able statesman, tho' he useth never so much art, sophistry, and cunning in his being so." Towards his Sovereign the Minister's veracity must be "universal and absolute," for, "notwithstanding that falsehood may sometimes be pardoned, and even accounted next to venial (tho' never allowable) in a comedian or in a valet-de-chambre, yet it is to be esteemed always unpardonable in any man of quality, and much more so in a Minister of State." But where neither any great prejudice can arise to the Prince, nor

damage to the people, the Minister may rightly suspend declaring his opinion, and even acquiesce in resolutions taken upon that of others. "To be noisy and stiff in contending about trifles, and fiercely to oppose the resolves of a Council Board in reference to them, which, be they of one kind or another, can be of no hurtful consequence to the Government, or to the public, will only serve to show too much pragmatism in those who are such and do so," and that they are either persons "of scanty and narrow intellects, or of a conscience superstitiously scrupulous." But save on such unimportant occasions, it is his duty fearlessly to speak out, "in that as he would by his silence act the part of a dumb centinel, who, upon the approach of the enemy, calleth not out nor giveth fire; so by his wilful and sinistrous counsel he doth play the game of a bribed and treacherous centinel, who first guides the enemy to the main guard, and after that conducteth them to the palace, and to the very bed-chamber of his Sovereign." Should he, for acting the part of a faithful counsellor, meet with ingratitude, "it will be the very glory of a Minister to take and to bear his mortification in such a case without murmuring, and much more to do it without any peevish or angry resentment."

In the second part he continues the theme, under the mottoes, also taken from Tacitus, "*Ita nati estis, ut bona malaque vestra ad rempublicam pertineant,*" and "*Diutius durant exempla quam mores.*" The fourth qualification required is that the Minister should be "a person of great and indubitable courage and fortitude, who dare be true and faithful both to his master and himself at the cost of his life as well as of his liberty and estate, and, as God himself hath declared it to be a property needful in every one who is to be a judge towards men, that he should be a person not afraid of the face of man, it is much more

absolutely and indispensably necessary in one who is chosen to give counsel and advice to his Sovereign. For as the courage of the gown, of whatsoever kind it may be, doth go beyond and exceed that of the buff or steel, so the fortitude requisite in one at a Council Board doth far exceed and transcend that which is required either upon the bench or at the bar of a Court in Westminster Hall. . . . His mind and soul should always be prepared and fortified against whatsoever, either disgrace or mischief, may overtake and befall him for his faithful performing of what his station and office requireth of him." The advice was a prophecy in the case of some of the members of the Ministry to whose chief it was addressed, and an impressive comment on it is furnished by the fortunes and the bearing of Henry St. John.

After descanting on several particulars and relations in which this great quality of fortitude should be displayed, and, strangely enough, citing as an example of the statesman's fortitude the successful policy of Charles II. towards the close of his reign, when confronted by "a numerous and disloyal gang of people," he argues that there may be occasion for it at a time when many subjects, instead of being contented with their constitutional rights, "will be both encroaching upon the few prerogatives that are left to the Sovereignty, and snatching at the remaining jewels belonging to the Crown, which if they be suffered to compass or effect, the King will sink below a Doge of Venice, and his title to the throne become precarious." He concludes together the second part of the treatise and the discussion of the quality of courage, with some observations upon some individual questions of contemporary policy.

The third part had a briefer title-page than the first, being headed, "On the qualifications requisite in a Minister of State at any season, but especially at this ;" and was specially directed to phases of ministerial responsibility that had an

immediate application. The new Ministry had come in on a wave of popular emotion, but their future course was beset with difficulties. The greatest of these difficulties was the ambition of Marlborough, and the correspondence of Bolingbroke shows that they foresaw that a conflict with the General of the Allies, which the Ministry would rather have avoided than precipitated, once begun, must be fought out with resolution and without delay. They held in reserve the weapon afforded by the great captain's knowledge that if he lost the royal countenance "such scenes would open as no victories will varnish over;" but they had no wish unnecessarily to humiliate or to cross him, though the main object of their policy was to accomplish the peace that meant for him the stoppage of financial profit, and the close of an unusually brilliant career at the head of armies. It is interesting to note how Robert Ferguson deals with the thorny personal problem that confronted his political friends, and treats the great military personage under whom his brother had served. The personality of Marlborough is evident before it is confessed that a certain great person is in the writer's mind; and, expressing himself without responsibility, the political essayist hints very plainly at the course that should be pursued towards one who was dangerous alike in the field, in the arts of diplomacy, and the manoeuvres of political intrigue.

He commences the third part by maintaining that a Minister of State should be entirely free from covetousness and ambition, one who cannot be influenced by wealth, honour, or desire of preferment to the injury of his Sovereign and his subjects; for one who is under the influence of these motives "will be always unsatisfied and demanding, tho' his Sovereign should both give him a share in the prerogatives of his Crown and divide with him the treasures of his exchequer." A man who, by great military or other com-

mands, has become more powerful than an ordinary subject, should be carefully watched in whatever station he may be placed. "Nor is anyone in power who reckoneth himself unkindly treated and disobliged to be continued in a condition wherein he may be able to pursue and compass his revenge." A Minister should not be allowed by his Sovereign to grow rich by any other means than his own generosity and bounty, or from inheritance and economy.

More especially, one believed to have an inordinate love of money should not be allowed to interpose between his Sovereign and his subjects, and, if in supreme command of his Sovereign's troops, ought not by himself or his relations to have the sale of commissions of all sorts; for many persons of quality may thus be hindered from obtaining employment for their friends, and gentlemen of narrow means may be rendered incapable of reaching the price at which commands are sold.

Ministers who are employed to serve the Crown as Commissioners of the Customs, Excise, etc., should be allowed such competent and liberal salaries as might encourage not only persons of rank but also of parts and interest to accept the posts, and place them above the temptation of being fraudulent to the Crown or oppressive to the subjects. There has been, it is intimated, great suspicion of a certain great person, who, either from avarice, or from carelessness of his Sovereign's interest, must have applied to his own use, or to the use of others, large sums of money which should have been applied to defray the expenses of the war; and it is suggested that any public servant enriched by the bounty of his Sovereign or Parliament should lay out his wealth in estates or lands, or place it in the Exchequer, so that it may be a guarantee for his good conduct.

Ferguson now proceeds to state the last great qualification of the ideal Minister, which is that "he should be a man of

inviolable fidelity." In choosing him his Sovereign should inquire into his intellectual and moral education and breeding, and the manner in which he had filled a private or inferior station. He should have a sincere love for his Sovereign's person, while the Monarch should make no less certain that he highly esteems the constitution and form of Government. There follows a specification of at least ten different ways in which the inviolable fidelity of a good Minister should exhibit itself.

The first is in keeping his Prince's personal secrets and transactions; and here the Plotter observes that there are three ways in which secrets or persons are betrayed by treachery—for a reward or bribe, from a love of talk, or by persons who betray secrets to show they have been trusted with them.

The second is in the advice given to the Sovereign concerning the government of his people. "And tho' the advice to be given to a King or Queen should be, that they may have the universal and tender care for the welfare and prosperity of all their subjects which the laws do require, yea and even to be better toward them than they do direct; yet to be mindful of expressing their respects to and for them in proportion to their several qualities and stations." And the Prince must be advised not to place too much confidence or trust in persons of inferior rank.

The third is in advice with regard to the money granted by Parliament for the support of the Crown in all its branches and for carrying on the war, "that he do break in upon no part thereof either for the ministering to his own personal and private occasions, or for the gratifying his particular favourites." A Minister should advise the granting of taxes in such a way that they may affect all subjects equally as much as is possible, and prevent heavy impositions on manufacture, agriculture, and traffic.

The fourth head is an extremely interesting one, for it deals with the delicate question of the Nonjurors and the Jacobites, but it is handled with considerable skill. Ferguson premises that in regard to them there are three things to be considered :—

First, that they are conscientious men, and that their refusing to swear allegiance to the Crown comes from a fear and belief of sinning against God, and not from rebellious principles.

Second, that whatever mistakes the Nonjurors may be under concerning the present Government, they are still loyal to the Monarchy of Great Britain.

Third, that the reasons by which the Nonjurors are guided are those which flow naturally from the doctrines of Non-resistance and Passive Obedience, which were not only given them by the Church of England, but were also imposed by a statute in Charles II.'s reign.

His advice is :—

1. That they should not be placed in any office of trust under the Government, but should be strictly watched in all their actions.
2. The Sovereign should be warned against listening to evil or false reports against them.
3. That in any criminal offence the offender alone should be held guilty, and not the whole party to which he belongs.
4. That they should be allowed the same rights and privileges as other English freemen.

A curious commentary on these opinions was furnished by the zealous endeavours made to fix the imputation of Jacobitism upon the Ministry, and the motions brought forward in the House of Lords urging the persecution of the Chevalier from place to place on the Continent.

The next method in which the fidelity of a Minister is to be manifested is in advising his Sovereign not to allow his

navy to become neglected, as it has lately been, and "never to trust the command at sea, and over his land forces, to one and the same hand."

Again, in advice concerning his allies and confederates, a Minister "is always to counsel his Sovereign to make good and perform whatsoever hath been stipulated and promised" by him, and to compel his allies to do the same.

Then comes the last and most important duty of advising "a safe and honourable peace." The object of war is only to escape evil, and, that gained, it is unwise to refuse peace. As an example, on the one hand, of foolishly refusing overtures with unfortunate result, Ferguson instances Charles VII. of France offering us Guienne and Normandy on condition of receiving homage, and, on our refusal, making a treaty with Philip of Burgundy, and forcing us to abandon Paris. On the other hand, as an example of engaging in unnecessary war, he cites Queen Mary's rupture with Henry II. of France, by which Calais was lost.

A Prince ought to have "both in his making and keeping of treaties a more singular and distinguishing regard to the welfare of his people than to his own personal honour, and a Minister should be fully aware that the best time for making a treaty is when the enemy makes the first proposals. If England had only listened to the French King's terms of peace, she would not be in the wretched condition she now is. This allusion to the abortive conferences of Gertruydenberg was certainly well founded, for peace could then have been made to more advantage than it afterwards was, and would have saved the heavy and barren slaughter of Malplaquet.

Care should be taken in advising the Sovereign in the choice of plenipotentiaries, and he should be urged not to do as some of England's allies have done, and draw up a treaty independently of the other allies, who are either bound to

accept it or be left without the aid of their confederate. Ferguson concludes by citing in illustration of this the Treaties of Munster, Nimeguen, Aix-la-Chapelle, and even Ryswick, and he lived long enough to hear the fierce denunciations that were hurled by the Whigs on the same account against the Treaty of Utrecht.

The Catalogue of the Advocates' Library attributes another pamphlet of the year 1711 to Ferguson. It is headed, "An Account of the obligations the states of Holland have to Great Britain, and the return they have made both in Europe and the Indies. With reflections upon the Peace." But he does not mention it himself, and it does not show in its style the antithesis and lavish illustration from classical and other authors which generally characterise his productions.

It was in August 1712 that he drew up the list of his publications, preserved in the Advocates' Library, and printed in the "Analecta Scotica," which has been frequently referred to.

It is a curiosity, both in its subdivisions, and the variety in tone and character of the papers which compose it :—

Books which I writt relating to Religion.

Justification on a satisfaction.
Of Moral virtue and grace, etc.
Of the Interest of reason in religion.

Papers which I do heartily repent the having been the author of.

The Black Box.
The Justification of the Black Box.
No Protestant Plot; in Three Parts.
Reflections on Addresses.
Smith's Narrative.
A Vindication of the said Narrative.

Reflections on the Jesuits' speeches who suffered for the Plot.

The Just and modest Vindication in answer to King Charles' Declaration on his dissolving the English Parliament.

The Detection of the Murder of the Earl of Essex.

An Answer to Mr. Penn's advice to the Church of England.

A Vindication of Monsr. Fagel's Letter.

A representation of the dangers impending over Great Britain.

The Justification of the Prince of Orange his Descent, and for settling the Crown upon him on the foot that King James had abdicated.

Discourses which I have published since God of His infinite mercy and grace convinced and converted me.

A Vindication of the Scots Address. Anno 1689.

A Letter to my Lord Chief Justice Holt about the Lancashire Plot.

A Letter to Secretary Trenchard.

A Letter to Robert Harley, Esq., in favour of the Scots Act for an African Company.

A Justification of the Scots' right to settle in Darien.

A Discourse showing that the Prince of Orange came not into England in favour either of our Religion or our Laws.

The Depredations of the Dutch.

The Large Review of the Summary Review.

A Discourse against the erecting the present Bank.

Of the qualifications requisite in a Minister of State. In three Parts.

Of the Misbehaviour of those who were concerned in the Exchanging Marine Prisoners.

Several Papers (printed by order of Parliament) which I

gave to the Council for defeating the Pretended Scots Plot, in which the present Duke of Athole was accused to have been concerned.

I also published Bishop Guthrie's Memoirs, to which I writt a preface.

The collection is a comprehensive one, but it is noticeable that, on the one hand, there is no mention in it of "The Appeal from the Country to the City," which is generally attributed to him, and that, on the other, it contains the three Parts of "No Protestant Plot," of which the first two have usually been ascribed to Shaftesbury. It was probably after it was made out that he busied himself with a work which he was apparently never destined to complete, but which was a literary undertaking of a peculiarly felicitous nature for one whose career had been so fitted to illustrate his subject. It was called, "The History of all the mobs, tumults, and insurrections in Great Britain, with the tryals of the ringleaders and betrayers of their country, from William the Conqueror to the present time. Begun by Mr. Ferguson, and continued by an impartial hand."

It commences by observing that though the mobs and insurrections, of which history showed so many in Great Britain and Ireland, had always terminated with the destruction of the ringleaders and their principal abettors, yet "the madness of the people has fatally spread itself from one age to another, and is become, even at this day, no less dangerous and infectious than it was at the very beginning." Therefore "The Old Plotter" has taken up the pen, in order that "this short history may be a standing caution to the common people, for whose use 'tis chiefly intended, against plunging before they are aware into such unhappy circumstances, by which they are rendered not only enemies to the public peace and welfare of their country, but also a scandal to

themselves and obnoxious to all good men. The collection of facts as to insurrections futile in their aims and fatal to their leaders is made as a warning for the future, and the author will not pretend to say "how acceptable it may be to those persons who are now labouring to promote disturbances and confusion in the kingdom." How much of the little book was by Ferguson's hand does not appear, but it is noticeable that either he, or the "Impartial hand" who took up his unfinished work, mentions the riot at the election of the Sheriffs in 1682 as one of the mobs, and gives the ordinary account of the Rye-House Plot, and a short narrative of Monmouth's rebellion, without mentioning the Plotter's name in connection with it. Coming to the Revolution, he remarks, "the occasion of which, the methods that were used to bring it about, and the circumstances that have attended it since, may well deserve an impartial historian to hand them down to posterity, they being such which no nation or age ever did or can equal." Of the reign of Queen Anne he asserts that, with the exception of riots at elections, and the disturbances connected with Dr. Sacheverell's trial, it was "one continued series of rejoicing and tranquillity," and declares that "the Queen was the darling of the nation, adored and beloved by everybody, except a turbulent faction whom no prince can please or no Government satisfy." This is not unlike Ferguson's style, but if it is his, it must be nearly the last word that he wrote, for the continuation was written at a time when the reign of King George had "not continued much above a year."

CHAPTER XIX.

1706-1714.

LAST SCENE OF ALL.

THE closing years of the turbulent Plotter's life were melancholy and uneventful. He lived in London in reduced circumstances, and Wodrow, writing towards the end of 1713, observed: "He is yet alive, in great want, and upwards of ninety years, and hath nothing but what he begs." The annalist was not a friendly one, and things were not so bad as his words would convey. A few old accounts among the papers of a north-country house enable us partly to confirm, and partly to correct the minister of Eastwood's account, and yield information that fills in the picture of the conspirator's home-life, to the extent, at least, of showing that in his old age his household was again enlivened by the presence of children. His brother, Major-General Ferguson of Balmakelly, had married when comparatively advanced in life, and his first wife, a Drummond of Cultmalindie, had died in 1699 or 1700, leaving two little infants, a boy and a girl. Their father was despatched to Holland as soon as war again loomed near, and when Marlborough was in the field there was little time to be spent with his children in Scotland. On returning to Holland from the triumphs of the Blenheim campaign, the General had married a Dutch lady of Bois-le-Duc as his second wife. The children had been sent up from Scotland to London, very probably to meet their father and step-mother on a hurried visit to

England between the campaigns of 1704 and 1705. They were never to see him again, for he died very suddenly at Bois-le-Duc in the following October; the step-mother and a little half-sister never came to Britain; and the guardians decided that they should remain for some time under the care of their uncle and aunt in the southern metropolis. There are in possession of the boy's descendant, Mr. Ferguson of Kinmundy, several receipts signed "Hannah Ferguson," acknowledging remittances made from Scotland by their cousin, Mr. James Ferguson of Pitfour, son of the Plotter's brother William, who acted as their principal tutor. In notes made by the cautious guardian on the tutorial accounts, that money was remitted "on her pressing letter," "on her earnest importunity," and to "relieve her out of straits," there is some corroboration of Wodrow's statement; and a correspondent writing to that guardian in 1710, alluding to the Plotter, observes: "I mark what you writ of Uncle's letter, whom I intend to see before I write my next, when I shall give you both his and Hannah's circumstances, which are melancholy enough." In that year Mrs. Ferguson died, and the guardians, "now thinking it for the benefit of the said children to be in Scotland, where their friends and estate are," granted a power of attorney to a William Hamilton to bring them north.

So the old man was left altogether desolate, and a receipt was even granted to his nephew in connection with "the funeral charges of the deceast Mrs. Hannah Ferguson." How sad an ending to the long affection, so touchingly evidenced by the letters rifled from their recipient more than a quarter of a century before! On the 9th of September Luttrell had noted: "Mr. Ferguson, well known for being concerned in so many conspiracies, is dead;" but it was a false alarm that had reached the diarist's ears, and may have been suggested by the death of the Plotter's wife.

Two years later he drew up the note of his writings for Anderson the antiquary, and he saw the last year of Queen Anne—if, indeed, he did not witness the house of Hanover come in. For it was in 1714—a year of crisis for his country, and marking the close of a distinct period in her annals—that the old colleague of Owen, chaplain of Shaftesbury, counsellor of Monmouth, and champion of the Lancashire gentlemen, closed in peace and penury the career that had seemed so certain to find its finish upon a scaffold.

The local historian of Robert Ferguson's native place introduces a notice of his life by quoting the old Scottish proverb, "It's a poor family that cannot spare one son to the pot and another to the gallows," and hints that he more than qualified for the latter fate. The first impression made by his story is one of surprise and wonder as to how he managed to escape the doom that overtook so many of his contemporaries and associates. His career had indeed been a strange and chequered one, and he well merited the character that had been given him, of being "a man by himself, and of as odd a make and mixture as this age," or any other, "has produced." If in his later years, in moments of reverie, he gave the reins to memory, and in reflection suffered to pass before him the forms of those with whom he had been connected in various phases of life and antagonistic camps of politics, the procession must have been a unique and incongruous one. From the scheming Shaftesbury to the managing Harley; from the evangelical Owen to the perfidious Lovat; from Russel and Sidney to Montgomery and Payne; from Sir Thomas Armstrong to Sir John Friend; from Argyle and Polwarth to Athole and Berwick; from the gay and gallant Monmouth to the austere and bigoted James; from the London apprentices to the Lancashire gentlemen; from the Nonconformists to the Nonjurors, the transitions were great and startling: and in how many

cases would the association raise the vision of a scaffold, and ambitious dreams dispelled in blood! How various had been the fortunes of old companions, and how strangely the paths of some had crossed in after life! The Huntly of early recollection had joyfully "followed the King his master" to the block, quaintly expressing his conviction that "this present Kirk and State are both marching too far in a wrong way." On a foreign and hated shore, the fiery spirit of the turbulent and talented Shaftesbury had from the "pigmy body" at last "worked out its way," while Ferguson's arms upheld "the tenement of clay;" Lord William Russel had failed to find the mercy he had refused to Lord Stafford; Sidney, Argyle, and Jerviswoode, "honest old Rumbold," and Sir Thomas Armstrong, and many others of lesser note, both Whigs and Jacobites, had paid before the eyes of all the forfeit which they ventured; the fascinating Monmouth had gone the same dark road. Polwarth and Stewart, Carstares and Smith, had survived to hold ecclesiastical and academic preferment, high political, and legal office in the Governments that followed the Revolution; while Lord Melville had escaped in the general dismay, to inflict on Payne, by the mandate of William, the tortures which Carstares had suffered in the days of Charles. And such are the revenges which the whirligig of time brings about, that those "worse tortures" which had been prepared for Ferguson when Carstares was seized on account of his resemblance to him, were seven years later resorted to, to extract information which might criminate him from the brave and unfortunate agent of the Jacobites; and Trenchard, the "cockscorn" of 1682, whose report from the West had precipitated Shaftesbury's flight, had lived to become Secretary of State, and to receive a scathing epistle from him on the arbitrary and oppressive use of power.

And as he passed in review the various claimants of the

Crown with whose causes his varied fortunes had been linked, he must have smiled over the various offices with which fact or fame had coupled his name. A possible Archbishop of Canterbury, a disappointed Secretary of State, a Privy Councillor *in futuro*, he had only been able to act as chaplain to an army in the field, and to illustrate, not in practice but in theory, the qualifications of a Minister of State. Scarcely less strange would be the recollections which the thought of the sovereigns who had filled the British throne during his versatile life would recall. It had been tenantless when he first set out from his youthful home in sight of Benachie, at the confluence of the Don and the Ury; for then "with armed heel" old Oliver "bestrode the Commonweal." But the picture would present itself of the Merry Monarch sauntering with his spaniels on the terrace at Windsor, and finding the leaves, which told with a reverence so impertinent, and a sarcasm so vigorous, the story of the Black Box fluttering on the brim of his plumed hat. And, whether or not there was engraved upon his memory an interview with James shortly after Sedgemoor fight, when he who was so stern to most showed mercy to him, there is no doubt that the thought of the assurances he had received from the exiled Prince, to whose cause he had returned when most forsook it, that he would never forget his services, was blended with bitter remorse as he remembered the fierce invectives he had launched against him, and the large share he had taken in producing the events that led to his dethronement. And whether or not he had told Dutch William to his face, that henceforth there was no trust to be put in kings and princes, he could certainly feel that in regard to the "Great Whig Deliverer" also, "a true history of his life would," as Calamy said, "disclose a great many secrets." The portly form of "Good Queen Anne" would call to mind Sir Thomas Stewart's

adjuration in the presence of the Council, and a smile would rise to his face as he realised the scene he was solicited to improvise of Sir Thomas and himself kneeling before her with halters round their necks. And he might also at times reflect that, after all, the political colour of the close of his life had not been so different from the tone of his early surroundings, did he remember how, while he was yet young in years, the little burgh of Inverurie was gay one Sunday morning with floating banners, waving tartans, and gay Cavaliers disporting the red ribbon which the house of Huntly wore for the King. It is also just possible, if one tradition preserve a truth, that among the many figures who stand out, far away in the field of early recollection, one would bear the fated head of the chivalrous Montrose.

We can imagine him musing with mingled feelings on what had been his more intimate personal associations with the men famous in history with whom he had been so closely connected. The friendship of Dr. Owen, the dying glance of Shaftesbury, the tossing in the little bark on the channel, and the disillusion he must have experienced on hearing of how in his extremity the unfortunate Monmouth, to whom he bore "an unfeigned love," had spoken of him; the tears that sprang to the eyes of James; the fidelity of Russel and the fortitude of Payne; the treachery of West and Rumsey, of Annandale and Ross; the effusive politeness of the plain-looking but astute young man from the North, whose secrets he had penetrated; the damaging knowledge he had obtained about Marlborough in England and Berwick in France; and the whole long and involved history of his relations with Presbyterians, Independents, and High Churchmen, Whigs, Jacobites, and Tories, made up an experience which few men could attempt to approach, and none can match.

It would seem, however, that these were reflections which he did not frequently give way to, or, if he did, that it was

only in such a manner that they were not allowed to affect at all his interest in the present. Whatever may have been his aspirations for the future, he seems always to have acted for the immediate, and assuredly, as far as it lay in his power, did not suffer himself to be hampered by the past. In one sense it might be said that, in the period of life allotted to him, he acted the parts of two different and distinct men. However obscure and inexplicable may be the change in his opinions and sentiments which occurred immediately after the Revolution, as to its suddenness, completeness, and reality it is impossible for doubt to exist. He draws himself across his life a line as marked and unhesitating as the Act Rescissory by which the first Scottish Parliament of Charles II. consigned to oblivion all the legislative attempts of the usurpers. Henceforth, as to all that went before of active politics, there is nothing but silence and repentance, and for the cause he now champions enthusiasm and exertion. Many a renegade might envy him the perfect composure with which he contemplates from an outside point of view transactions of which he had been the moving soul, and the complete self-possession with which he condemns them; for though his activity with the fertile pen, as well as the scheming brain, led him often to refer historically to incidents with which as he wrote he must have felt himself painfully familiar, there is, after the first confession, never a whisper of the "*quorum pars magna fui.*" It was a disgraceful part; to be ignored always in public, to be bewailed at times in private; to be confessed with contrition, should the opportunity arrive, to one; but ever to be atoned for by unremitting labour to reverse it and restore the injured. Yet was there one consoling consideration; the demon of faction and sedition might have possessed him, but he had not betrayed a trust that never was reposed. His opposition had been open, though its details were shrouded in mystery,

and he was free from the inexpiable baseness of Marlborough and Sunderland. He might have been the very Magdalene of politics, but—Judas as he had been called—never an Iscariot.

Great, nevertheless, as was the self-condemnation with which he visited his former self, and unmistakable as was his crossing from one camp to another, there was one phase of activity which must have frequently conjured up reminiscences of the *Alter Ego*. It has been so invariable a custom to consider the Revolution of 1688 as the fount and origin of all that is beneficial in our Government, that it is not easy to conceive how differently things appeared to many during the reign of William, and how much there was to fortify the belief that the change had been much greater in men than measures. The genius-confining sway of the "Venetian oligarchy," surely working its way to the power it grasped so firmly under the house of Hanover, was scarcely so great an advance from the arbitrary acts of one who, whatever might have been his faults, was yet an English monarch, and the country party of William's reign had much in common with that of Charles's, though each forms a link in the pedigree of two hostile parties. Ferguson more than once in his later productions describes the Whig idea as being to reduce the monarch to the position of a Doge of Venice and the expression which Lord Beaconsfield was to make so famous had been used at the time of the Rye Plot. But that design of the "great Revolution families" had no chance of success while the throne was filled by a Prince of so strong and ambitious a character as William possessed, and various circumstances postponed its triumph for some time longer. What was, however, more evident to the observation of all, and more easily enforced on the popular mind, was that the new Government was guilty of many arbitrary acts analogous to those for which the Stuarts had been denounced and driven

away. And, when seated at his desk composing a political manifesto, Ferguson appears, in spite of the change, wonderfully consistent with his former self. We have again the appeals to all that are true Protestants, honest Englishmen, and lovers of their country ; the powerful sarcasm that plays all round its subject, the historical illustrations of the genius of the constitution, the maxims of policy from the pages of Tacitus, the recurrence of phrases which show that his mind was thoroughly versed in the Sacred Scriptures, the denunciations of Government oppression, the bold expression of the principles of Liberty, and the vigorous style, sometimes diffuse and tautological, but on the whole sustained, and rising at times to a nervous and vehement persuasiveness. One passage in particular, from his pamphlet on whether Parliament was dissolved by the death of Queen Mary, may be held to show, in his most characteristic manner, that he was not after all so inconsistent in his alternate partisanship of Monmouth, William, and James. It is not without application to the conduct of Whig Parliaments of later date : "Nor can I better give the character of the two Revolution Parliaments, and particularly of the Whig members of them, than in the words of Tacitus, namely, *ut imperium evertant libertatem præserunt, si præverterint, libertatem ipsam aggrediantur* ; that in order to depose and drive away the King they set up for and made a show of acting for Liberty, but having compassed that, they have assaulted and subverted Liberty itself." While he abandons the Whig doctrine of an imaginary contract between the governor and the governed for the Tory basis of historical fact, he implicitly maintains the limited character of our constitution, and never wavers in his advocacy of British Liberty.

Assuming that his career was inconsistent, it does not necessarily follow that it was insincere ; and the only theory of his character which gives an adequate explanation of his

utterances as well as of his general conduct must be one which recognises him as being what he is described by one editor of Absalom and Achitophel—"a restless and vehement, but an honest man." Whether he had sufficient grounds for the length to which he went in opposition to the Stuarts or not; whether the reasons, if we had them, which induced him, as Wodrow says, to "turn Jacobite most senselessly," just when the Jacobite cause was fairly down, would bear examination or not, both satisfied him, and he was a fanatic before the Revolution just as he was an enthusiast after it. Not till after marvellous escapes puzzled ordinary comprehension, and a sudden conversion startled the public, does his sincerity as a Whig seem to have been questioned. That he was even then on the side of the Court seems to have been no more than an *ex post facto* conjecture of Oldmixon; and the general trust of his associates forbids the idea of treachery. The Tory writers all treat him as an open, avowed, and dangerous foe; we have seen how L'Estrange speaks, and North also observes: "As for Ferguson, to do him justice, there was no public mention of him without a sting."

It is the nature or the inherent vice of some minds, that they always see the worst in whatever exists, and where this coincides with a strong will and able intellect, the tendency to seek a remedy "not wisely but too well" is often irresistible. And when, after many delays, defeats, and dangers, what seems a great deliverance is at last achieved, only to be followed by a sudden and complete disillusion, the reaction is apt to be as violent as the effort was earnest. The Plotter was not the first or the last advocate of constitutional change who has found more overthrown than he intended, and discovered that political mischief is done more easily than it is remedied.

It is in sudden and unstudied remarks, of which an unusual proportion are recorded in the Plotter's case, that

genius breaks forth and character shows; and when such are of a piece with the tone animating more ambitious compositions, and with the tenor of private correspondence, we are warranted in accepting them as evidences of unaffected enthusiasm and sincere, though possibly mistaken, zeal. His was certainly a character of which the idiosyncrasy was more marked than those of most, for many of his observations are unique in their piquancy and force. That "presbytery was a head too big for the body" was not a reason which it would have occurred to most men to give for an ecclesiastical conversion, but it states very concisely the defect of Government by General Assemblies. In the letters which so touchingly preserve the anxiety which his wife's health caused the daring conspirator, there are many passages which prove how single-minded was his ardour at that time:—

"I have peace in endeavouring to have done my duty, whatsoever punishment they think me worthy of upon that score." . . . "I would not exchange my condition for ease and preferment, accompanied by a base neglect of my duty to God and the nation." . . . "I had rather return to England than be Burgomaster of Amsterdam, should we enjoy our consciences with the security of our lives there." . . . "I have seriously reflected upon and examined all that hath exposed me to trouble, and, instead of finding cause to regret, I have comfort and peace in endeavouring to do what I could for the cause of Christ and the interest of England. Surely it is better to suffer for the discharge of one's duty, than to be involved in calamities through the neglect of it." . . . "Thou knowest I have often said, that were it not that I would not be wanting to serve the interest of God and mankind, so far as I am able, I hardly think this generation, for the generality of it, worth so much as the saving."

These more solemn statements of resolute conviction are quite corroborated by remarks made among his political

associates. He undoubtedly was "the brightest of the company when among the bigots." The plot was "a glorious work," its authors *Liberatores Patriæ*, and Monmouth's attempt "a good cause." He believed that "God would not leave them unless they left Him;" the solemn text he preached from before Sedgemoor was a grave reference of his earnest belief to the highest arbitrament. There was a touch of the same enthusiasm three years later when he mounted the Dissenting pulpit at Exeter; and from beginning to end there is nothing of Latitudinarianism or *laissez-faire* about him, nor did he ever halt between two opinions. The violence of his language was paralleled by the vigour of his actions; and although, when he changed after the Revolution, he had no opportunity of exhibiting his energy in the field, the old spirit still gives colour to his sentiments. The assurance that "the author of these memorials will be as soon on horseback as any man in England with his printer;" the assertion that "he will come to give himself up in any place in France your Majesty chooses, in order to be sacrificed if the enterprise fails;" and his having often said that, "if King James came back, he would put a rope about his neck and fall down at his feet and ask his pardon," all testify to the fact that his adherence was as devoted and ardent as his hostility was uncompromising.

And though the result of his energy in public affairs was to ruin his private fortunes, his aid was very valuable to any cause which he espoused, and, little as he achieved for himself, his influence was great, though unacknowledged, on the destinies of his country. We cannot peruse the accounts of the various arrangements in connection with the projected rising against King Charles, or the advice and information communicated by him to St. Germain, without being struck by the ability he manifested, by the ascendancy which his powerful intellect obtained for him over

his companions, by the extent of his information and the soundness of many of his judgments. It may be possible that to the tenor of his intercepted correspondence with his wife, he owed some of the forbearance which was believed to be extended to him; but if the Government thought him not to be so dangerous because he was devout, they were much mistaken, and his power of self-preservation in subsequent straits proved that he was well able to take care of himself. His memorials as a conspirator, and the evidence amassed about him, show that he had a grasp of the whole situation such as few of his associates possessed; that the general scheme and particular details were thoroughly worked out in his mind; and that his foresight and caution were only surpassed by his constant vigilance and activity. The characters of his contemporaries, the temper of the people, the effect of particular measures, were all matters as to which he kept his eyes open; and his extensive study of books did not prevent him being thoroughly conversant with men. Fierce as was his partisanship, and violent as was at times his polemical language, there is a dignity in his conception of the Constitution and the State, and an air of respect in the references of his contemporaries, other than party annalists, which the circumstances in which he moved would not lead one to expect. Poor, and discredited by error and by failure, his opinions yet seem to have been listened to with attention by eminent men, and he could not, without great qualities, have influenced so many able men of different characters and positions so much as he undoubtedly did. Mixing in the equivocal society and situations which he often did, there is no act of personal dishonour or political perfidy, such as stains the fame of nearly every politician of the time, recorded of him; he seems to have turned upon Montgomery with some heat, saying he never would consent to any such course, when that intriguer proposed to enter

the service of William to further the interest of James ; and in spite of the loose conjectures of hostile partisans, who could not explain his actions, the solid fact remains that in no one case did he ever in all his difficulties betray an associate. His conduct in the Montgomery Plot contrasts with that of Annandale, who repaid his hospitality by betraying him ; and many as were the plots in connection with which he was arrested, on no occasion did any revelation of his put another man's life in jeopardy. If it be granted that a man who had been actively engaged along with the leaders of the Whigs, and had seen in the policy of James a deep design against the religion and the liberties of Britain, could honestly and sincerely come, rightly or wrongly, to the conclusion that he had been misled and mistaken, the career of Lord Macaulay's gipsy of politics becomes, if not so wise, at least much more creditable than those of many of the heroes of his pages. Both phases of the Plotter's life stand separate investigation ; the strain upon his reputation is fairly and justly to reconcile them. Yet is it so improbable that an honest but hot-tempered man, finding himself disappointed in those from whom he had expected something very different from what he saw, and also a little piqued at glaring neglect of his own past exertions, learning that much he had believed was groundless, should reconsider the past, reverse the engine, and retrace his career ? Sir Robert Peel was converted to Free Trade after the triumph of Protection in 1841 ; his most prominent disciple executed a sharper political curve in the closing months of 1885 ; and since the days of William of Orange men have left their political party just after it had achieved success. At the time of the Revolution Ferguson was too much behind the scenes, and saw too closely the working of the secret springs that move affairs, to retain illusions that had formerly swayed him ; and he became

convinced that the motives and the purpose of that great enterprise were very different in fact from the enthusiastic impulses that had prompted and animated the unfortunate attempt of Monmouth. Perhaps, like another character whom historians have treated with scant mercy, he "knew both our parties too well to esteem any;" and, like him too, he drew from his experiences wisdom which fate never allowed him to put in practice. The pamphlet on the qualifications of a Minister of State, which is the result of the lessons of fifty years, is marked by much sound sense, and, while Conservative in spirit, is at the same time Liberal in tone. It is just both to the Nonconformists and the Nonjurors; and the absence of vindictiveness towards those he has left, and the capacity which the old partisan shows for looking at both sides of vexed questions, are quite in accord with the tone of respect with which in his earlier writings as a Nonconformist he is careful to speak of the Church of England. Indeed, from a sentence in the Apology, he seems to have cherished at the time of the Revolution the hope of some accommodation between "the two great litigant parties in these nations about religion," which good men have sighed for and sensible men desired in all generations, and for which the great opportunity had been lost at the Restoration. In summing up his literary life, he places alone, on a level of their own, the works "which I have writ concerning Religion," and it may have been a source of comfort, in reviewing a life of cross currents and political failure, that these labours at least had dealt with matters which were the "common concernment" of all sound Protestant theology. Some of his publications manifest an intimate acquaintance with "the high politics;" and, indeed, he wrote on almost every great question of the day. The general system of power in Europe, the policy of the Papacy, the pressing problems of commerce and colonisation, then coming

to the front, all exercised his intellect and industry ; and the encroachments of our Dutch allies brought him into print, as well as the misfortunes of an errant prelate. The lore he had at one time or other contrived to amass was immense and varied ; he could quote Grotius and Puffendorf as well as Augustine, and Bracton as well as Plutarch and Livy. But perhaps the spirit of the man is best illustrated by the fact that his thoughts are most frequently expressed in the language of Scripture and the clear-cut sentences of Tacitus. No one, it may be asserted, who had not a soul for the grand and patriotic, would make the stern Roman his favourite author ; and Ferguson's resort to the annalist of the Cæsars is so frequent as to become a serious fault of style.

But if his sentiments were cast in the classic mould, and the subjects on which he expatiated confined to no clime or concern that interested his generation, his deeds and his prelections are often enlivened with a flavour of humour, which assuredly was the product of his native land, and bears the stamp of "benorth the Mount." The fast which Monmouth's army kept under his direction is of a piece with the device which a legal grandson of his brother William fell upon to secure more cautious consideration for Jacobite prisoners of the '45, by dressing his own servant in Highland garb, sending him in with the accused, and proving a conclusive *alibi* ; and with a grotesque story, preserved by the historian of the house and clan of Mackay, which represents another brother, General Ferguson, as securing a number of French prisoners, who far outnumbered their escort, by an operation on the fastenings that kept their garments together. True genius only would have sought refuge in the "Heart of Mid-Lothian," and it was very Aberdonian to conclude a narrative of the battle of Sedgemoor with an injunction to the defaulting officers to be as favour-

able to the reverend critic as they were that morning to their enemies.

Considerable interest is also given to his pamphlets by the wealth of anecdote with which they are illustrated, and the pointed phrase which clinches an argument, or points a truth. The study of his writings enforces the conclusion that they are the productions of a well-informed, resolute, and self-confident character. The quality of courage which he requires in a Minister of State was conspicuously displayed throughout his whole career, and his daring disregard of danger was only equalled by the readiness and resource with which he always baffled pursuit and evaded disaster. The quiet affection of his domestic relations furnishes a striking and pleasing contrast to all the rest of a life so desperate in its schemes, so perilous in its vicissitudes, that it is perhaps impossible to bid him farewell more appropriately than by accepting and re-echoing his own declaration that "he had been a great rebel, but never was a traitor."

APPENDIX I.

FERGUSON'S LETTERS—MANUSCRIPT "CONCERNING THE RYE HOUSE BUSINESS."

THE letters in Robert Ferguson's handwriting in the State Paper Office, which owe their preservation there either to having been intercepted in transmission or to having been seized when the Government swooped down on the homes of the Rye plotters, are thirty-eight in number, and are all addressed to his wife. With one or two exceptions they were written either from Holland in the close of 1682 and commencement of 1683, or from various hiding-places in London during the spring of the latter year.

The dates and contents fix eighteen letters as written in or about London in spring of 1683; the dates show six as coming from Holland in November and December 1682, and nine in January and February 1683. Of the remaining five, one is dated so far back as 1668, and seems to have been carefully preserved by the recipient—as, indeed, it deserved to be. One bearing no date was written from Shropshire, and, if not referring to political matters under "the metaphor of marriage," as was done by some of the conspirators, gives the Plotter, whose full surname it bears, in a unique character. Another is dated from Amsterdam in 1679, and one, possibly of the same year, was written from Brill without a date. The only remaining one may be of the same year, or written soon after the flight in 1682, as it is addressed to Ferguson's own house, which his wife seems to have left immediately afterwards.

A little light is to be obtained from signature and address. Of those written from Holland, certainly, in 1682, four are signed "R. ff.," and two are unsigned; of those in 1683, one is signed "R. ff.," another "Rob. ff.," and five bear no signature at all. Of those written in hiding that year, one is subscribed "Robert," and the rest are unsigned. The addresses of all these

are different from those of the remaining five. It would seem that, as public events would lead us to assume, up to that time there had been little need for concealment of name, for the letter of 1668 is signed "Ro: Ferguson," that from Shropshire "R. Ferguson," that from Brill the same, the one from Amsterdam, of 29th October 1679, "Rob. Ferguson," and the remaining undated one, "R. ff." But while that signature might suggest that it was written at the same time as others similarly signed, from Holland in 1682, it is addressed to "Mrs. Robert Ferguson, at his house in Hatton Gardens," while the first of the dated 1682 letters from Rotterdam is addressed to "Mrs. Ferguson, to be left at Mr. Brindley's, at the Crown, in Fenchurch St., London."

The manuscript, in the same handwriting as these letters, has no title on the first page and no signature at the end; but the whole is endorsed thus, "Concerning the Rye House business," in the hand of Ferguson; and, in an official hand, "Rye House Plott." Late in life, Ferguson drew out a list of his own works, the original manuscript of which is in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh. A note subjoined, in the handwriting of Mr. James Anderson, a well-known antiquary of last century, says, "The above list is writt by (Robert) Ferguson, the famous plotter; it's his own hand, and they are a list (he gave me) of all the pieces he ever wrote, before the present August, 1712." With the exception of his theological works, the papers mentioned are all essays in political controversy, and neither this manuscript, which must have been seized when his repositories were rifled after the Revolution, nor his narrative of Monmouth's rising, largely quoted by Eachard, is alluded to. But a careful comparison of a tracing of one of the letters with his full signature, in the State Paper Office, and of the opening and concluding lines of the Rye Plot narrative, with this original paper in Edinburgh, shows distinctly, allowing for the modifications of handwriting caused by the lapse of nearly thirty years, that they were written by the same hand. The papers of a country-house in Scotland, which might have been expected to contain much throwing light upon the subject, were, in the early part of the present century, destroyed by fire. I print here the "Rye Plott" Manuscript in full.

FERGUSON'S MS.

CONCERNING THE RYE HOUSE BUSINESS.

THEY must be very ignorant of the affairs and transactions of the world, who understand not the designs that have been carried on for many years in England, both for altering of the ancient legal Government, and for supplanting the established Reformed Religion. For besides what was deposed by Dr. Otes & several others who in reference to some persons were rather wanting in detecting what they knew, than guilty of revealing more; and yet was enough in Coleman's Letters, as well as in what he further confessed at his examination before a Committee of the House of Commons in Newgate, and to gain credit to the popish Conspiracy, and to establish the belief of it beyond all rational control. 'Tis withall known what a noble person yet living, and who & had being ch : of minister had stood acquainted with all their counsels, offered to disclose—provided he might have had certain terms and conditions previously accorded unto him. And all men are sensible, what methods were taken by the Court, not only to weaken, baffle, and ridicule the evidence relating to the popish plot but to render that which was hope'd would have proved to difficult in attempts, a means of advancing them, by grafting a protestant Conspiracy upon it. Which as it was the first thing that gave an allarm to many loyal and peaceable persons of all ranks and conditions; so the fears wherewith they became thence possessed administered Rise to several consultations, how to prevent their own ruin, and convey the Reformed Religion and the rights of Englishmen down to their posterity. They had long observed, that all endeavours in a parliamentary way, were not only withstood & rendred ineffectual, but they were preverted to the begetting division among protestants, & to the enflaming one party with all the wrath and rage imaginable against an other. Yet so different were the principles, aims, & interests of those, who had both the same apprehensions of what the Court was driving on, and who were equally minded to save themselves and the nation, that they could not agree in the means whereby to effect it, nor center in the same ends, in case it could have been compassed. For setting aside the excluding of the then D. of York, which they all feared to prosecute with the like vigor, there were few

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other things, wherein that party could be brought to be heartily united, But every one hope'd to have improved the jealousy and dissatisfactions wherewith the Kingdom was filled, to have given that Reformation to the Government, as might have reduced it to the Rules & limits of the Original Constitution; or to have introduced an other Form, under which the Rights of the people, should have stood more secure, from being invaded by those trusted with the Administration. And as most of the old Republicans, thought to have been able to have so managed the several dis-contents and fears, as to have obtained means & advantages of subverting the Monarchy; so there were diverse of most approved Loyalty to the Crown in all former times, that were ready to fall in to concurr with them thro a belief that they would be no longer safe under Kingship, & that by reason as well of the carriage of his late Majesty, as because of apprehensions they had of farther mischiefs to ensue under a Popish Successor. Nor did there want some who, under all their pretended zeal against Popery & Tyrañy, yet intended no more, than the bringing the late King under a necessity of changing his conduct in particulars that had given the greatest disgust, & of discharging those who had been employ'd in the chief Ministry, thereby to have made way for their own obtaining upon the principal conduct of affairs. This was all that my L^d Shaftesbury pursued for many years, till the Court having endeavoured to destroy him upon forged crimes, he betook himself to other methods, and that in revenge for what they had attempted, as well as to prevent further efforts of their malice. From thence it was that during the very time of his promoting the Bill of Exclusion with all the art and industry he could, he nevertheless set himself in opposition to diverse projections, which had he approved, & engaged his friends to embrace & prosecute, would have obliged the King to consent to the passing of that Bill, or at least would have obviated many of those evils which followed upon its rejection. Whereof I shall only mention two, which as they are not known to many, so they imported nothing but what might have been legally attempted, and withal lay in a probable tendency to have produced great alterations in their resolve at Whitehall, without either indangering the Monarchy, or prejudicing the last King, unless it was that one of them would have put him into little fright.

The first was, that some Gentlemen of the House of Commons, año 80, finding that all the gentle ways which had been taken, were not only useless to the end wherein they were designed, but turned into motives of dissolving parliaments & for contriving the ruin of those who had shown themselves faithful to Religion & the liberties of the subject, they therefore thought of trying a more rugged course, which they imparted to the E. of Shaftesbury begging him to interpose with his friends in their House to second them in it. Which was to have unravelled & laid open all the miscarriages of the Government from the time of the Restoration, particularly how far the King had been accessory to the popish plot, and thereupon to have moved for Adjourning the House to Guildhall. And as they who knew the late King must acknowledge that there was no likelier method of gaining upon him, than by influencing his fear, so I can affirm that the persons who proposed it, intended no more by it, than the reducing the King to hearken to such Counsels, as would have been safe to himself as well as to the nation. But this my L^d Shaftesbury would in no way's consent unto, tho upon what inducements, I can not tell, unless it was that he apprehended, several things would have been detected the guilt & reproach whereof might have so affected himself, as to have represented him unfit to be at any time trusted with the chief Ministry, thereby have disappointed him of that, which he considered his Abilities qualified him for, and to the compassing whereof all his actings at that conjuncture were specially designed.

The second was this, namely that during the session of the same parliament, some gentlemen [conceiving ?] that the late King instead of being prevailed upon to comply with the Bill for excluding the D. of York, intended rather both to throw off parliaments and under Forms of Law by means of corrupt & *durante bene placito* judges, not only to rule arbitrarily but to revenge himself upon those with whom he was offended ; they thereupon proposed the intermitting the prosecution of the forementioned Bill, untill they should have secured themselves against all illegal proceedings from Westminster Hall, by arraigning some of those that were there on the Bench, against whom they had enough to ground an impeachment, and to bring them to deserved punishment. And as this was a matter, that the King would not have judged it safe to have given interruption unto, by proroguing or Dis-

solving parliaments, so there is no thing more certain, than that the making two or three of the judges, monuments of the displeasure & justice of the Nation, would have given check to all illegal proceedings for the [the] remainder of that Reign & thereby have both prevented the many evils, that have been since brought upon the Kingdom by the treachery of those mercenary men, & have removed all occasion for the concern which others became engaged in, thro' finding that neither the Law, nor their own Loyalty was any protection unto them. But by reason of the E. of Shaftsbury's pressing his friends in the House of Comons, to insist upon the Bill of Exclusion, & not to suffer it to ly neglected a while, this wise & honest projection came to be defeated. For the impeaching of the judges, & the endeavouring to get them Arraigned, was a vain attempt, while by their unseasonable & indiscreet pursuing the foresaid Bill, the King stood furnished with so plausible a pretence for Dissolving the parliament, which he accordingly did, as also that which assembled the March following at Oxford.

But in all that time, to what degree soever the fears & discontents of men were arisen, there was not the least Conspiracy set on foot against the King's person nor the Government. For the design of seizing the King at Oxford, of which there was so much discourse afterwards, was a meer forgery of the Court, invented by some of the Ministers, in hope thereby to have the better palliated the true grounds of that hasty Dissolution. Nor had they the confidence to afford it, in the Declaration that was emitted for the justifying of that procedure, tho' they industriously heard together all that persons regardless of modesty, truth, honor, & justice, could apprehend conduceable to the fastning guilt & reproach upon that & the foregoing parliament. Neither was there ever seen under the worst & most tyrañous Governments, a series of more unjust & dishonorable actings than those which followed in the Trial & condemnation of Colledg & in the comitment & jucidtmnt of my L^d Shaftsbury, &c. For besides the erecting an Office of subornation for hiding villains to swear inōcent men out of their lifes; it fills one with horror & amasement to think what low & base things the late King & some of his Ministers stoopt unto, in order to debauch fellows to be Witnesses, whom & themselves knew to be guiltless of what they caused them to be accused of. And could they

have obtained credit to be given to what was deposed against the forementioned Earl; it is not to be doubted but that they would have pushed their malice and injustice further, & have brought all they had a pique against, to be confederated with him in his pretended crimes. I can speak the more positively in this matter, in that one or two of the miscreants, whom they prevailed upon afterwards to perjure themselves, acquainted me with the whole while it was transacting, & offered to detect the conspiracy that some were carrying on against my L^d Shaftsbury & several others, if they could have been secured of more money for revealing it, than the Court had tendered in order to corrupt them, to swear him, & such also as they were to have a life of guilty of a plot. Of all which I informed his Lordship a week before he was apprehended: and tho I diswaded his treating with those fellows either directly or indirectly, & much more his undertaking to reward them, in case they would disclose what they were put, & by whom employed, yet I intreated him to go immediately to the Council, & to demand justice against those who were preveting persons to swear to forged crimes. But this declined hearkening unto, from a confidence that whatsoever their rage was against him, yet their discretion would not suffer them to pursue a thing he could so safely baffle, & which being detected would turn so much to their infamy. And as he presumed they would not send him to prison without bringing him first before the King & council, so he questioned not, but that he should be able there to justify himself to the shame & confusion of all that were accessory to so black a contrivance. Nor needs there more to convince the world of the falsehood of that he was charged with, than that neither my L^d Howard, my L^d Gray, nor any of that large sett of Witnesses, with whom they have been since furnished, ever deposed any thing in reference to that affair, nor were so much as interrogated about it. Tho as the clearing it up, had there been such a design at any [at any] time on foot, would have both vindicated the late King from the imputations he lay under in reference to those proceedings, & have induced very much to the justifying his future actings, imposing Sheriffs unduly elected upon the City, & in the seizing of their Charter: so it appears by the Tenor of the printed Informations, most of which are extremely distant from truth, that this Tribe of Witnesses would have

been ready enough to have expiated their crimes, & to have attoned for their lives, not only in discovering all they had heard or known concerning that matter, but in venturing to swear to all the lies that should have been suggested to them as the price of their pardons, if they would have but given them such a varnish, as might have recommended them to the world under any probability of truth.

'Tis now easie to imagine what resentments were raised in many & what reasonings they were naturally led into, thro the Courts suborning Witnesses to destroy those upon forged crimes whom they neither durst publically massacre, nor could means privately to assassinate. They hereupon plainly sought that all the obligations they had stood under to the King, were become dissolved: and seeing they could no longer hope for protection from him that therefore they owed no more allegiance to him. The bribing Witnesses to foreswear men out of their Lives & Estates, was reconkn'd worse than the sending forth Bandits to murder them would have been; & therefore that whatsoever the Laws of Nature, Nations, or the Kingdom, made lawful in the latter case, was no less in the other & might as justifiably be applied unto. But notwithstanding all that was discoursed to this purpose in confiding companies, & what very many of all ranks accounted to be allowable in the circumstances to which they were reduced; yet so long as thro the enjoyment of honest Juries they saw any likelihood of being acquitted, & of having their innocence vindicated upon an arraignment & Trial: they resolved to submit to all the reproach, loss, and suffering, that false accusations, close imprisonments, & the being indicted before partial & mercenary judges, could expose them unto; rather than to involve the nation under the calamities that attend an Insurrection, & which do accompany a civil war. For except it was now & then a little lavish talk, which is a thing that indiscreet persons will always be subject unto when they are uneasy & there were no endeavours used towards the disturbing the Government, till the Court fell upon plund'ring the City of their Charter, & the rendring themselves masters of returning what juries they pleased, by obtruding such Sheriffs upon London, as would Impañel none, but whom the King & his Ministers should either direct unto or approve of.

So that the first Overture towards an Insurrection that I

know of, was about the beginning of 82 after the commencing a Quo waranto against the City of London about their Charter ; at which time there not only passed several Messages between the E. of Argyle & the E. of Shaftsbury, but they had two meetings, about concerting a joint Rising in England & Scotland, in case the Court proceeded to carry matters to that degree of Arbitrariness, which the method they were then pursuing seemed to threaten & portend. Nor did the E. of Shaftesbury sooner enter upon that Transaction than he used all imaginable industry to have those made acquainted with it, whose discretion & fidelity he could in any way's rely upon. But the different prospects, as well as [as] principles, which those two Earls acted upon, the mutual jealousy, they entertained of each other, & their treating that affair with so much reservedness on both sides, as weakened the confidence between them, that the enlarging in a matter of such weight & consequence should have obliged them unto, together with the E. of Argyle insisting upon a previous supply of money, & the declining to give birth to any motions in Scotland, without assurance of being seconded & supported by an insurrection to be made at the same time in England, gave not only a defeat to all designs of the kind at that season, but put an end to all further consults between those two Earls, & made them less frequent in their Messages to one another, & more apprehensive of each others insincerity. For as there were no provisions made yet in England towards the relieving themselves by recourse to Arms ; for they who were most discontented by reason of the danger in which they conceived themselves, were fonder of their money than to part with it upon the terms proposed by Argyle ; which as they saw they could not answer, so they were sensible that had they put him in possession of it their unpreparedness to correspond with him would have vindicated him from all aspersion & reproach, in his not applying it to the end whereunto it was designed. So that all the issue & effect of this Transaction between those two Earls served only to discover, what little preparation, notwithstanding all the fears & dangers men pretended to be in, & all the talk that had been spread & fomented to encourage the heats, & cherish the hopes of those that were dissatisfied with the Kings proceedings & obnoxious to his wrath had [had] been made for relieving themselves by forceable means, & what small

probability there was of bringing the Grandees of the party, into union of Councils & endeavours for vindicating the Rights & Liberties of their Country's.

Whereupon all discourse of a form'd & general insurrection being silenced & laid aside, several who had been wrought into a belief of the zeal, & care of some leading men, & foster'd into a confidence that all matters were maturely digested, towards the begetting a Revolution, whensoever the designes of the Court should so far unvaile & open themselves, as to administer ground for justifying it to the world; grew highly offended with those, who had deceived & abused their credulity in an affair of that consequence & hazard, & finding themselves so far involved, as to be liable to the utmost severities of the Law, they began to act upon different bottom's, to erect different labells, and to give begining to those various projections that their dangers suggested unto them & their several Temper could best fall in to comply with. Some being of a courage to allow of no methods of delivering themselves but what might pass among all men for honorable; while others that were pusillanimous & cowardly bethought themselves of such ways as they judged to be more easie & feasible. Accordingly most of the sumer past away in secret complaints, in the feeling one an other pulses & in studying to possess as many as every one could, both with a sense of the woful condition which the nation was already brought into, & what had all imaginable grounds further to dread & expect; & in showing that unless men were more willing to become sacrifices to the rage of Whitehall & S^t Jame's, & had a mind to be tyraniſed over in their consciences, persons, & estates, & to see slavery intailed upon their posterity, how necessary as well as lawful it was, to think of means whereby they might maintain the laws of their Country, & both retrieve the Liberties of which they had been rob'd, & preserve those that remained, whose subversion their Governors were pursuing. And indeed the illegal proceedings of the Court for seizing the Charter of London, & the obtaining their Franchises to be declared forfeited to the King, together with the violince as well as fraud that were used in imposing such Sheriffs upon them, who by packing partial & corrupt juries, might put every man's life & fortune in their power, that they had a malice or pique against, and as an addition to all, their reviving heightning the persecution of Dissentors;

I say that all those things contributed extremely to the increasing the fears, & consequently to the augmenting the resentments of many, & thereupon to the hurrying them into those courses, which they conceived to be most adapted for preventing the misery & destruction that they fancied themselves designed unto.

But though many things were discoursed among persons, of one condition & another, concerning the necessity they were under, either of perishing branded with the infamous characters or of saving themselves by such method's & in the use of those means which men are allowed to retreat unto for hindring their being murderd, yet till after North & Rich's being declared Sheriffs there was nothing formally concerted about an Insurrection, much less any thing proposed of a clandestine attempt to be made upon the King & Duke. The first resolution taken about flying to Arms, was immediatly before the Duke of Monmouth's going to Cheshire. For upon having previous assurance given him that there would be a great concourse of people, as well as of his friends, to meet and entertain him ; the E. of Shaftsbury not only advised, but wrested a promise from him of drawing his sword, in case the assembly proved so great as might give him encouragement to commence a War with any hope of success. But tho the number of those that there attended upon him, exceeded what was either foretold by others, or expected by himself, & tho he was solicited by diverse upon the spot, to embrace that opportunity of Declaring himself, & of drawing his sword for vindicating the Laws & Liberties of the Nation, & for asserting the Rights & priviledges of Parliament ; yet he excused & declined the doing of it ; partly because most of those whom he saw there met together, were wholly naked & destitute of Arms, & come thither meerly out of curiosity to view, without the least thought of listing themselves souldiers ; and partly by reason he was not only uprovided of money & arms, wherewith to maintain & supply them or others, without which he judged it would have been a high indiscretion to imbarque in war, but because he had established no antecedent correspondence with other parts of the Kingdom, nor come to any agreement with his friends in those Counties where his interest was greatest, either for their coming to him, or for rising in their own provinces, to give a diversion to the Troops that

would be ready to attacque him. But how weighty soever these Reasons were in themselves, or how well approved of & acquiesced in by several, as a sufficient justification of his conduct in that matter; yet there having been for some time before no great intireness betwixt him & my L^d Shaftsbury, this carriag of the D. of Monmouth in omitting that occasion of Rising, & therein of departing from his word; together with the King's forebearing to comit him to the Tower, after he had been seized by a Messenger, & brought up in the nature of a prisoner, administred ground to the foresaid Earl, both of aspersing him himself, and of begetting a distrust of him in others; & became the pretence, if not the true motive, of contriving to redeem themselves & to rescue the Nation, by an enterprize to be made upon the person of the King & his Brothers, in which as they thought there would be no necessity of using the D. of Monmouth, so they conceived there would be no need of any large fund of money, or magazine of Arms, towards the being in a condition of effecting it. And withall such of the discontented party as were Republicanes lookt upon it, as that which would be an Introduction to the final subverting of the Monarchy, in that none who were either conscious or accessory to such a design, could be so voide of sense after the execution of it, as to give way to the exaltation of any to the Throne, seeing whosoever became possessed of the Crown, would find himself obliged not only by principles of justice & honor, but of safety & interest, to punish & revenge the Fact.

How long it had been in agitation before I was made acquainted with it, I can not positively tell. Only this I found after it had been cominicated to me, that as it had been sometime on foot & fomented and entertained by many; so that nothing; but the impossibility (by reason of my general conversation & credit among them) of its escaping my knowledg, till it could be ripened & put into execution, induced them to bring me upon the secret. For knowing me to be not only exceedingly attached to the D. of Monmouth's person & interest, but an avowed defender of a limited & regular Monarchy, as the alone Form of Government, agreeable to the Laws, Ballance, & Genius of England, they were tender of cominicating a matter of that nature unto me, till they saw that it could not be avoided. And I have reason to think, that it was my own mentioning to some

of the chiefest rank and greatest reputation of the party for wisdom & interest, what I had heard muttered by several of the little impolitick people, of a more easie, cheap, safe, & compendious way for relieving our selves, than that of an Insurrection, which prevailed upon those greater & more reserved persons to unfold them selves to me, & to ascertain my silence by the confidence that they placed in me. The first man of note and consideration from whom I received that light into it, as gave me to see that such a thing was not only thought of & designed, but that it was countenanced by those of more prudence & better quality, than I could have imagined, was a gentleman that is at present at Amsterdam, & who is esteemed a great statesman & excellently versed in the Laws of England, tho never accounted very friendly to Kingship. For having been long acquainted with him, & meeting him occasionally at a friend's house, we entred into discourse of the posture of affairs, & of the counsels which the King seem'd to be eagerly pursuing; whereupon as he largely represented to me the danger, that the nation & all who had asserted the Liberties of the people were brought into, with the necessity of doing some thing speedily for preventing our being arbitrarily destroyd, & for hindring the subversion of the ancient legal Government; & having declared the hazard, folly, and impracticableness of thinking to ingage people in a general insurrection, as well as the little success to be expected by such a method; he added that the only thing which remained to be rationally attempted, towards the obviating the evils wherewith our selves, the Kingdom, & posterity were threatned, and in the pursu'ing & executing whereof there would be the less danger, in that it needed only be imparted to a few, was to employ the zeal & courage of some brisk lad's to destroy the King & Duke, whom he expressed by the name of stagge that would not be impaled, but leapt over all the Fences, which the care & wisdom of the Author's of the Constitution had made to restrain them from comitting spoils. To which, knowing the temper of the person with whom I had to do, I made no other reply save that I thought it easier to represent our maladies than to find a cure for them; & that it became men of wisdom & experience, to be careful least the medicine they prescribed, should not increase our disease in stead of healing of it. How ever, being thereby sufficiently confirmed, that there was violence

projected to be executed upon the King & Duke, I resolved to trace it a little further, & to endeavour to penetrate as far into it, as to see whether it was a design harboured only among the old Commonwealth's men, or whether it had the countenance & approbation of any other. Accordingly embracing an occasion of visiting my L^d Shaftsbury, to whom I could at all time make my own access, I represented unto him the fatal misunderstanding between him & the D. of Monmouth, and that as I knew of none besides the Duke, who had an interest in the minds & affections of the people to draw them to Arms for asserting their Rights & Liberties; so I feared it would be difficult to find any other qualified to command them, with the Authority that would be requisite. To which in way of Answer he told me that as he could neither commit his own life & fortune, nor those of the party, to the fidelity of the D. of Monmouth, of whose correspondence with his Father he had an indubitable proof, by his breach of promise in failing to take hold of that advantage of Rising, which had been so lately offered him in Cheshire, so the close attachment of my L^d Russel, & of several more, whom he had always depended upon, to the said Duke, had made him think of a more compendious way of Redeeming the nation than that of an Insurrection. Whereunto having subjoined that he would never forget the services I had formerly done him, so there was none in whom he could repose more confidence, notwithstanding the esteem he knew me to maintain for the D. of Monmouth, in that he judged the motives thereunto arose not from any thing in his person, but an opinion I was imbued with, that he might be rendered serviceable to the common interest. And then concluded, that he was resolved to try, whether it was not possible to save & deliver the nation by a few, seeing as there was no hope of effecting it by united Councils & a combined strength, so the imminent dangers in which men conceived themselves, thro North & Rich's being ready to enter upon the execution of the office of Sheriffs in London, would not allow them to wait so long, as such a method would render necessary. To all which I replied to this purpose, namely, that tho I could not entertain so sinistrus thoughts of the D. of Monmouth as I found his L^dp possessed with, yet that his L^dp should never have cause to repent the confidence he placed in me, nor to alter his opinion concerning my integrity. And that as it was some satisfaction

unto me, to find that I was not singular in retaining a good opinion of the D. of Monmouth; so I assured him that I valued no man, but in subserviency unto, as well as in consistency with, the preservation of Religion, the Rights of Mankind, and the Laws & Liberties of my Country. And that if I once found the D. of Monmouth to be so treacherous & criminal as his L^d reported him, he might in that case be sure, that the love & esteem I had hitherto preserved for him would not only cease & decay, but be exchanged into & give place to other passions. Finally adding, that tho towards the attaining of the common deliverance which we all aim'd at, there might possibly be means offered by some, that I could not approve of, yet I would submit both to torture & death, rather than become guilty of so infamous an action, as to betray any man, whose intention was to free his country from slavery & to preserve the Legal Government from being altered, & to secure the Rights & privileges of the people from being trampled upon & subverted.

Now tho what the formentioned Earl had suggested, to weaken my esteem & confidence of the D. of Monmouth, had made no great impression upon me, as having understood the business of Cheshire as fully as any, yet my concernment both for my self & for the safety & interest of the whole party, led me not only to inquire of those whom I judged most capable of informing me, but to gather all the light I could from my own observation both of himself, & of those that were about him, who acted by the measures that he prescribed them whether there was any just foundation for the censures fastened upon him & which might support the jealousies, that some were industriously striving to beget of him in the minds of men. And as I soon found, not only by the best penetration I could make into his own carriage, & that of his immediate dependents, but also both by converse with himself & by researches among those of unquestionable honor & integrity, who knew his whole conduct, & toward whom he always acted with the least reserve & disguise, that he had administered no cause for the reproaches wherewith he was aspersed, save that he would not thrust himself headlong into action, to the exposing the cause to miscarriage, & the party to ruin, before there were such correspondencies settled, & provisions made, as might afford a probable view of success, & thro being somewhat adapted to the greatness

of the undertaking, and thro carrying some proportion to the number & strength of those whom he was necessarily to encounter. So that as the effect of my Inquisition was the becoming more zealous for the person & interest of the Duke, in conjunction with the deliverance & happiness of the Nation, & my commending him to all as the only instrument in prospect, by whom there was any probability of being rescued & saved; so by obtaining an opportunity of conversation for a whole week with my L^d Shaftsbury who did me the honor to stay so long at my house, I could easily perceive, that all he suggested before against the Duke, was meerly invented in order to ruine his reputation with the party, & to justify the laying him aside; but that the true reason of his alienation from him, was partly a disgust of Monarchy, of which he was grown weary, & judged that the subject could be no longer secure under it; and partly an apprehension, that the preparations towards an insurrection would not only require an expense, which few would so far open their purses as come up unto, but would prove so tedious & so liable to detection that he & many other might come to be destroy'd, before any relief was to be expected in that way. And therefore having bethought himself of another method, which was to be the cutting of the King & Duke of York by an assault, that a small number of men, & an inconsiderable sum of money would be sufficient for, he accounted it needful to raise such a hatred in the people of the D. of Monmouth as that he should never be able either to arrive at the Throne, nor to get possession of a power, whereby to be in a condition to punish what had been perpetrated upon his Father & Uncle.

Being by this time more confirmed in the integrity of the Duke of Monmouth; & having arrived at a knowledge of the grounds & motives of other people's dissatisfaction with him, & finding that all I could say, did not prevaile upon the E. of Shaftsbury to return into a union and good understand with his noblest & best friends, with whom he was at a distance as well as with the Duke, I intreated him with all the earnestness & importunity imaginable, to admit and to bring Mr. Charleton to him, being not only his cousin, but one to whom he lay under great obligations, & who besides his sincerity in the publick cause, had approved himself cordial & affectionate to his L^dp in his worst circumstances. For I hope'd that Mr. Charleton would

not only have been able, to withdraw my L^d from private cabelling, & to divert him from undertakings which the whole party could not approve of, & venture their lives & fortunes in justifying; but have proved an instrument for reestablishing a correspondence & confidence between him & the Duke, & for removing that coldness & distance betwixt him & others, which his misintelligence with the Duke had occasioned. But tho I was so successful as to obtain leave for Mr. Charleton's giving him a visit, yet instead of seeing those good effects of their meeting which I expected, they parted worse friends than they came together. The one avowing & persevering in the ill opinion he had conceived of the Duke; & the other both continuing to justify him, & declaring his resolution to act in nothing, unless in concert with him.

Now having in the time while those things were transacting, come to understand more of the design, that was hatching against the person of the King & of his Brother, & finding it imparted unto, & approved by several, that I could not have imagined; I thought my self obliged by the sincere regard I had to the publick cause, as well as by reason of the unfeigned love I bare to the person and interest of the D. of Monmouth, without naming any that were Authors of or instruments in it, to acquaint him that such a design was projecting & carrying on; & that as I saw no way whereby to hinder it, save the endeavouring to anticipate it by a speedy Insurrection; so that it was his concern to take care that they who were involved in that enterprise, might not from an apprehension of his revenging it, attempt the destroying of himself, & that he ought likewise to be ready to obviate whatsoever they who were enemies to the Monarchy might promise themselves in case it succeeded. Upon the hearing whereof, the Duke having expressed his detestation of such a design, & having signified how much [he] esteem'd himself obliged to me for the intimation I had given him of it, he required that in testimony of the friendship which I professed to have for him and as I would oblige him in a matter wherein his duty & honor, as well as his safety & interest were wrapt up, that I would take two things upon me. First, to penetrate into, & superintend all the steps & advances that should be made in it; & secondly, not only to do all I could towards hindring the execution of it, but to assure him of finding out way's & means how

to prevent & obstruct it. To which I humbly replied, that as he allotted me a province wherein it would be hard for any man to behave himself at the same time wisely & honestly, & which it seem'd impossible to conduct without departing from that simplicity & plainness, which I desired to be found at all times & to all persons in the exercise of; so he exacted that of me whereof I could undertake to give him no security after all the art & diligence I should be able to exert. And withal I took the liberty to represent unto him how that besides what I should be accounted obnoxious unto according to Law, for being conscious to such a conspiracy & concealing it, if thro the treachery of any made acquainted with it, it came to be detected to the King or his Ministers; that I should also not only be exposed to assassination by those embarqued in the carrying it on, if they once knew that all the improvement I made of being admitted upon their Councils, was to desert them & hinder their success; but that I might fall under the hatred of his Grace, & feel the effects of his resentment and revenge, after I had used the utmost prudence, zeal, and industry to serve him in what he enjoined me, in case what those men were designing came either to be executed without my knowledg, or proved beyond my power to prevent. To which, nevertheless, I added, that least I should seem to faile answering the good opinion he had pleased to conceive of me, or should be judged to disobey him in a command so just in it self, tho the complying with it would be attended with many snares as well as dangers, I would so far surrender myself to his will, as to submit to what he put me upon, provided he would name two other persons fit to be trusted with a secret of that importance, who might not only be witnesses of my fidelity in conducting what he recommended unto me but with whom I might upon all occasions advise & concert the best and most expedient methods that were to be taken pro re natâ for corresponding with his desires. To this he agreed, & immediately named S^r Thomas Armstrong for one, giving me assurance that after he had spoken with S^r Thomas, there should be an other assigned, in whom for secrecy, prudence, & integrity I should have cause to be abundantly satisfied. Which was accordingly done, but whose name it would be injustice & infidelity to mention, in that he is still living, & by being known, might at one time or an other, come to be as much exposed to

the revenge of those whose projections he concurred to disappoint, as he is already to the [to the] wrath & pursuits of the Court for the having been informed against, that he was [he was] both conscious of & had approved that part of the Conspiracy, as well as the having been active in promoting the other branch of it. Only this I may say, without doing injury to him or giving either offence or advantage to any, that as he [was] a person of known worth & honor, so he was always of the communion of the Church of England. But as I do not know whether it was the Duke himself who spake to that Gentleman about it, or whether he only employ'd Sr Th. Armstrong both to acquaint him with it, & to engage him to use his industry, prudence, & interest for obstructing it, so I do much less know, whether the Duke of Monmouth ever imparted it to any others, seeing I could never perceive that my L^d Russel had any intelligence of it, tho he was the only person of Quality whom the Duke seem'd most to value to confide in.

Now by the time that we three could meet together, and come to debate what was fittest to be done pursuant to that recommended unto us, the King was gone to Newmarket, & they who stood embarqu'd in the design against his person, were hastning to make what preparations they could, for assaulting him, as he should pass by Rye-house, at his return. So that being obliged to use all expedition for diverting the execution of what was intended, we resolved upon the four following methods in order thereunto, which as we judged to be such as would raise no jealousy in the minds of those men & their Abettors, so my self upon whom the other two pitched for the managing & improving of them by reason of my acquaintance & interest among that party might escape the mischiefs that my becoming suspected, would expose me unto. The first was, to set on foot, & to carry on, Consultations about an Insurrection; that so thro men's coming to have a prospect of deliverance an other way, & the being cherished with [with] the hope of one, by a form'd & general Rising, there be yet less countenance & encouragement given to an attempt upon the King's person. The second was, to insinuate to such of those as were engaged in that design, that could bear to be calmly reasoned with, & were capable of receiving impressions by what could be rationally offered, that just grounds there were of fear that tho many could inwardly

approve & would secretly rejoice in the execution of such an enterprise yet that there would very few be found who would openly justify the doing of it, or who would venture their lives to protect those from punishment, that should be prepared for the perpetration of such a Fact. The third was, to represent that what soever the numbers might be, whose principles would allow them to assert the lawfulness, and to vindicate the justice of destroying the two Brothers; yet that these were in no condition of being either ready or provided as they ought to be, in order to withstand those that would be forward to revenge it. The fourth was, to get possession of what money I could hear was to be collected for furnishing those with horse & Arms that were to incounter & attack his Majesties person & those that accompanied him, & having shifted off the disposal of it till he should be returned to London, to repay it afterwards into their hands of whom it had been received. Which as I carefully & faithfully did, so by that means in conjunction with the former, I found small difficulty in stifling & diverting what was to have [to have] been executed upon the King & D. of York as they were to return from Newmarket in October 1682. For as the business had not been long enough in agitation to be so well digested & ripened, as the importance of it did require, so I must say in favour of the memory of Mr. Rumbald who was to have commanded those that were to comit that fact, that he not only calmly hearkned to every thing which was suggested that might discourage him, but alledged diverse reasons himself both as to his doubtfulness of their succeeding, should they have ventured upon it, & of his apprehending that the events which would ensue upon it, would be very different from what they expected, who were zealous to have it done. However least they might at that time have fallen upon the King, contrary as well to my expectations as to my endeavours, & that either thro the Conspiracy's being laid broader than I had been able to discover; or by reason of the concealment of any part of it from me, by those who pretended to admit me upon their secrets; I told Sr Th. Armstrong, how necessary it was for the D. of Monmouth, not only to be in the City on the day when the King was to return; but to be ready (in such a case) to mount, both the securing himself, and in order to assert the Rights & Liberties of the people. Which under pretence of dining with a company of

Gentlemen he accordingly was; and upon whom Sr Th. Armstrong all that day attended, contrary to what my L^d Howard falsely fastens upon him, as if he had not been to be so found, till after the King's Coaches were come into Town, & whom he thereupon villanously asperseth by saying that he verily believes, that Sr Thomas was to have headed the party, that was to have set upon & destroyed the King.

But now that design being prevented for that time, it was thought needful to proceed with all diligence, in the forming & maturing things for an Insurrection. This the D. of Monmouth was the more willing to pursue, that he might thereby both obviate all projections of the former nature for the future, and prevent the mischiefs that would infallibly follow, in case either the party should come to fancy themselves to be only deluded, with simply promises & vain hopes of being relieved from their fears, & delivered from their dangers; or in case the Court should by one means or an other arrived at the knowledg of what had been too openly discoursed, of the one branch of the Conspiracy as well as of the other. This also the E. of Shaftsbury was the more ready to approve of & cooperate about, in that the forementioned design, upon which he had for some time set up his whole Rest & expectation, had been choak'd and diverted. For tho he still retained much of his old opinion of the D. of Monmouth, & avoided giving him a meeting, notwithstanding his being often importuned thereunto, for debating & adjusting matters between them, & for the allaying jealousies, & the renewing of mutual friendship & confidence; yet by frequent messages both to the said Duke & to my L^d Russel, he did all he could to animate them to an insurrection, & to convince them of the necessity they were under, of seeking their own safety, as well as that of their friends, by recourse to Arms. So that what I have now intimated, gave the Rise & occasion to the Consult at Mr. Thomas Shepard's, which proved afterwards so fatal both to that honorable & vertuous person my L^d Russel, & to that honest Gentleman Alder-man Cornish. In reference to which meeting, I do account my self bound in respect to their memory as well as to truly to affirm upon the faith of a Christian, that as Mr. Cornish was neither present during the Debates, nor heard anything there of what was transacting, having continued only so long in the room, as to drink a glass or

two of wine, & to excuse himself from staying; so my L^d Russel was so far from being there before Coll. Rumsey, & that Rumsey was the first man who came thither, & when Sr Thomas Armstrong & my self, tho arriving sooner than my Lord, found sitting alone by the fire at our entrance into the Room. At whose presence, as we two as well as they who came after, were not a little surprised in that he was neither invited nor expected; so the only reason why he was unhappily admitted to remain, was pretending to be sent with a Message by the E. of Shaftsbury. For tho we all knew that he was designed rather as a Spy upon the Company, to observe whether our proceeding in the matter that was to be treated appeared vigorous & sincere, than one that was worthy to deliver a Message, seeing there was no occasion for any such thing, in that his L^dp had that very day conveyed his desire & opinion to a noble person there present, by an other hand: yet that we might not administer any new umbrage to the said Earl, as if we intended only to delud & amuse him, Rumsey was [was] permitted to continue among us, that he might be able to report to him that sent him, with what frankness, zeal, & integrity we acted. What Resolutions were then taken, & how they came to be defeated, is too publickly known, to need any place in this Relation. But whether the frustration of them, ought to be ascribed to a malady, which the Gentlemen on whom it is charged had contracted by a sinful adventure, & for which he is said to have been at that time under cure, or whether it is to be ascribed to his cowardice, which upon the prospect of approaching difficulty & danger, had more power over him than truth & honor, I can not positively affirm; tho I must add, that as he had but the night before encouraged the Duke to it, & given him all imaginable assurance of his preparedness to assist him with a considerable Force, so it was in the confidence thereof, that the Duke agreed at that time to an Insurrection. And that it proceeded from that Gentleman's want of courage, I do the rather incline to believe, in that the same person withdrew from England & abandon'd the Duke año 1685, after he had not only been acquainted with the Duke's design of making a descent into England but had been informed how much he was trusted unto, & relied upon, for succour & aid. However 'tis certain, that upon this Gentleman's declining to fill the post which he had formerly under-

taken, and his pleading how unready the Country was to Rise upon so short warning, the Resolution taken at Mr. Shepard's came to be retracted & departed from. At which, as most, if not all, to whom it had been communicated, grew highly offended, as suspecting it impossible a design imparted to so many could be long concealed, & thereupon foreseeing their own ruin thro having been conscious unto & concerned in it; so my L^d Shaftsbury having received fresh intelligence from a friend at Whitehall, that the Court had obtained new matter of Accusation against him, & that they intended to seize & arraign him, resolved immediately to withdraw, & to depart the Kingdom with what privacy he could. And my self being told about the same time that there was a warrant issued out for apprehending me, & that my destruction was unavoidable if I fell into their hands, I did therefore in order to scape their fury, & to provide for my safety, determine to depart the nation & to retreat thither. And as I ow the intelligence of my danger, & stand indebted for my life to a pastor of the Church of England, who had accidentally heard it from a Court Lord to whom the present King had imparted it; so Atterbury used such diligence to have executed his warrant, that notwithstanding the warning I had, I very narrowly escaped him, he entring at one door as I got out at other.

Now during the time I was forced to abscond until a Master of a Ship could be found, with whom we might securely trust our selves to be convey'd to Holland; I not only took care to acquaint the D. of Monmouth with the necessity I was under of withdrawing, & to begg & obtain his leave; but I gave S^r Th. Armstrong & the other Gentleman in concert with whom I had acted, a full account in what posture I had left things; & particularly told him the names of those, of whose reviving the design of assaulting the King's person, they were to be most jealous & watchful. And that as Rumsey & West were of all men the chief instigator's to it, and whom to essay in the least to diswade, would infallibly provoke them either to betray all they knew to the Court, or to raise a hatred in the whole discontented party, both to those who should give them such advice, & to the D. of Monmouth whose instruments therein they would be accounted, so 'twas to be feared, that such whose knowledg of what was intended before, had rendred apprehensive

of being first or last detected, would in order to prevent the punishment to which they saw themselves obnoxious, be easily prevailed with to undertake it again : unless some other method were thought of & vigorously pursued as well for delivering them from their fears, as for redeeming both the Dissenters from the persecution, & the Kingdom from the oppression & slavery, under which they groaned. Of all which S^r Thomas Armstrong & the other Gentleman were extremely sensible, & having expressed what a loss my departure would be, thro their becoming thereby disabled in a great measure, either to hinder the one or to promote the other ; they would hardly consent on any Terms to my Remove offering their assistance for my lying concealed in the Town. Nor could I have brought them to have consented to it, had I not promised in case of necessity to return, whatsoever either the hazard or cost of it should prove.

How opposite the E. of Shaftsbury's sentiments of the D. of Monmouth, were to mine, after our arrival on this side, was obvious to most that conversed with us ; so that the avowing both the opinion I had of his integrity & the high esteem I continued to maintain for his person, while my L^d Shaftsbury was upon all occasions expressing the contrary to such whom he could trust, gave surprise to many & among other to Mr. Fletcher, & hath led him since to question me about it. Nor had I been long here ere S^r Th. Armstrong & the other person whom I had forewarned what they were to dread, and by whose means they would find it revived & pushed forward, came to understand that the design for destroying the King, was not only reassum'd & ardently prosecuted, but they judged by the informations that were given them, that it was so far ripened & advanced that it would not be in their power to obstruct or divert it. And as they thought it no way's safe to discover themselves to Rumsey who was the only person of that tribe with whom they had any intimacy, lest instead of becoming instrumental to serve them, he should betray them to his companions who would thereupon become enraged both against them & the D. of Monmouth : so they had no acquaintance with Mr. Rumbold, who tho he was reckon'd to be in the head of that contrivance & pitched upon to command those that were to execute it yet he was the least violent in carrying it on of all that were concerned, and the most inclinable to hearken to what

could be offered discourage it, without either being offended himself at those who suggested the difficulties, dangers, & mischievous consequences that would attend it, or naming much less representing them under ill characters to the furious folk, that would have [been] ready both to asperse & destroy them. But whereas S^r Thomas & the other Gentleman could easily foresee, that if I returned without the knowledge & invitation of some of those who were upon that Conspiracy, I should have the less credit among them, & be rendred thereby incapable of answering the desires & hopes of my friends, in preventing what these men were engaged in ; therefore S^r Thomas made application to Rumsey & represented how necessary it was to have me at London against the time that the Gentleman sent for from Scotland were expected to be there. So that thereupon having received Letters from Shepard & West, written in disguised terms importuning my return ; I went over in February & arrived at London on Ashwednesday, being about three or four days before the Court departed thence for Newmarket. And having the Friday following received a visit from S^r Th. Armstrong & been informed both of the new project that was on foot for forming an Insurrection & of the design that was revived for destroying the King, in which some were more violent than ever : I thereupon soon after not only discoursed Shepard concerning what his friends were transacting, but by his means obtained a meeting with Rumsey & West. Of all whom I learned, that they had no hope of seeing any thing effected in the way of a general Rising, and that as well as by reason of the disagreeing principles, aims & slow procedure of the Managers, as in that none of those were come from Scotland that had been sent for, nor any money provided, without a supply of which they judged the Scotts would be both unable & unwilling to stirr. To which having added many bitter & invective expressions, against those who pretended to have been forming an Insurrection, as if all they aimed at, had been only to insnare men, & that it would be no injustice in such whom they had so long deluded, to discover their conspiracies & to redeem their own lifes at the expence of theirs ; they concluded that there remained nothing practicable, but the Lopping point, meaning thereby the cutting off the King & Duke. Which as they said was imparted to too many, to scape long undedected, so they affirmed that it had

received that approbation from most to whom it was made known that it would be beyond the power of any to avenge it, if it were once executed. By all which & what they farther related, I could easily discern, that as vast numbers had arrived at some intimation of it, without testifying the least dislike or disallowance; so it would be difficult considering the humours of these men & their Bigottry in that design, to know how to observe any measures towards them, or to think of methods whereby to manage them. Whereof having soon after given S^r Th. Armstrong an account (the other Gentleman being out of Town) & he having signified to me how desirous the D. of Monmouth was that I should wait upon him we agreed to adjourn all farther consideration of what was fit to be done in that matter, till after I should speak with the Duke & thro receiving light into what was transacting in order to an Insurrection, might be the better capacitated to allay the ardors of some of those who were for falling upon the King & his Brother, by affording them a prospect & hope of deliverance another way. And tho I had already discovered too much of Rumsey's inclination & spirit, to judg it either possible to withdraw from pursuing the forementioned design, or that it would be safe directly to endeavour it, yet I thought that the putting some testimony of confidence & respect upon him, might both keep an esteem in him for the D. of Monmouth, & render him the less jealous of my self; therefore I humbly projected that Rumsey's house might be the place, where I should have the honor of waiting upon the Duke, being confident that he would express so much of the breeding of a Gentleman, as not to obtrude himself into the Duke's private conversation with any further than he should be called and invited. So that this being readily condescended unto, I attended twice there upon the Duke; & having given him a brief deduction of all I had learned, & received the favour of understanding from himself, what progress had been made both for disposing matters in England towards an Insurrection, and for bringing Scotland into Union therein with them, & that it should not be thro any neglect or faileur of his, if it did not speedily succeed; he concluded with declaring his abhorrency of an attempt to be made upon the person of the King, & that as he expected from me the improving all the art & diligence I could to prevent it, so he required that no man might know of

his having been told that there either was, or had been, such a design on foot.

Now whereas I had not thitherto seen Mr. Rumbald since my return, nor any of the rest who were embarqu'd in that part of the Conspiracy, save those I have named, I was therefore desirous before that S^r Th. Armstrong & I should come to any concert about what was to be done for obstructing & diverting what they were upon, & untill the other Gentleman should return from the Country, to meet Mr. Rumbald, together with such others as he Rumsey and West should think convenient, with whom having accordingly met at West's chamber in the Temple; I soon perceived, that they were not only far from being in a condition to execute it, but that Mr. Rumbald was less attached unto & colder in it than he had been represented. For whereas in October he had required only the assistance of twenty persons for the execution of it; he now refused to undertake it under the number of fifty, & withal insisted upon the having some persons of quality brought so far to approve it, as that the Actor's might be secure from being afterwards punished for it. So that finding the prosecution of it reduced unto and stated upon those term's, & that after three consults which we had within the compass of a week, there was no further advance made towards it, than had been the first moment; I plainly saw that all the difficulty there would be in diverting it, would be how to cover my self & friends from the jealousy of West & Rumsey, least upon coming to apprehend their having [been d-]eluded & amused, their wrath against the King & D. of York, should be exchanged into rage against those, by whom they should account themselves either abandoned or obstructed in the matter they had been pursuing. Of all which having given S^r Th. Armstrong & the other Gentleman an account (who was by this time returned out of the Country) we came after a due consideration of the whole, to sum up our opinion in reference to what remained safest & best for us to do, into these two things namely that as it should be their business, to treat Rumsey with all familiarity, address, & confidence, seeming to be intirely in his sentiments, so it should be my province, to endeavour both to ascertain my self whether Mr. Rumbald was really so chill in that designe as I had reported him, and to penetrate into the motives of it, & by whose means

he was come to be so. And as they carefully acquitted themselves towards Rumsey in what they had undertaken; so I failed not to perform what was recommended unto me in relation to Mr. Rumbald. In order whereunto having sought & obtained a meeting with him alone, & having discoursed that whole design of ovo, & shewed that as few men of any rank or character, would be brought to approve it publicly, tho there were many that knew of it and wished it done; so the very mentioning of it to persons of quality & estate would be look't upon as a design upon their lives & fortunes: he thereupon not only told me how loath he was to proceed, & to take the infamy of it upon himself & a few such as he should draw in to assist in the execution of it, but that he was dissuaded from it, by the person that of all men had the greatest ascendancy over him, & who had been the first proposer of & mover unto it: and whom I have had occasion to mention as one that spake of it to myself under the cant of Killing outlying Staggs & Beasts of spoile. This relation and account given me by Mr. Rumbald, was so far from appearing improbable, or the giving me any surprise, that I could not only bring my self immediately to believe it, but was able to fathom & comprehend the reasons of that gentleman's giving so different advice the[n] from the counsels he had offered before. For there being an intimate friendship betwixt him & the person with whom Sr Thomas Armstrong & my self acted in concert; it was from thence obvious to me, that some part of this alteration might arise from the suggestions & arguings of that friend, and be owing to the influence he had over him. To which having added an other consideration how this conversion might have been effected, I saw no cause to question the truth & reality of it. And that was the foresaid Gentleman's being introduced by Coll Sydney not only into a familiarity with the E. of Essex & my Lord Russel, but with the D. of Monmouth himself; tho not chosen into the number of the publick managers of affairs towards an Insurrection, yet that he was privately consulted upon all occasions, applied unto as the chief Oracle, & intrusted to prepare & draw up a Remonstrance of the grievances and oppressions of the Kingdom, and how far the King had invaded & subverted the Laws, even to the changing of the Constitution; all which I judged to have been sufficient grounds & motives for the abandoning his former

thoughts about assaulting the King's person, & for his coming into the sentiments of those [who] were for vindicating the Laws & Liberties of the people, by a formed & joint Rising in the two Nations. But these things I concealed from Mr. Rumbald, & in way of Reply to what he had told me, I enlarged in commending the wisdom of that gentleman, & in magnifying the zeal he had at all times expressed for the preservation of civil Rights & Liberties, & for the having them conveyed down to posterity, as full & inviolate as they had been transmitted to us; and that if he had deserted his opinion about delivering the Nation by an attempt to be made upon the King & Duke, it must either have proceeded from his judging the thing impracticable, or from his foreseeing how impossible it would be to shelter those from the wrath & revenge of the Kingdom, that should be found Actors in, or to have had any accession unto it.

However, from that day forward, there was not one step really made towards the execution of it; and all after this that was warmly said or seemingly done by Mr. Rumbald for carrying it on, was only to cover himself and his friends from the jealousy and resentment of those who were violent for it to such a degree, that they would neither hear of any other method of rescuing our selves and redeeming the Nation, nor bear to be reasoned with, either concerning the difficulties in getting it executed, or the ill consequences which might ensue upon its being done. And therefore if Mr. Rumbald disowned at his execution the having intended the perpetration of such a Fact, according to the publick prints, and the speech published in his name have declared to the world, it was no more for ought I know than what is true, nor did he in my opinion either lie or dissemble in saying so. And whereas the preventing of that design hath been commonly ascribed to the King's returning sooner to London than he otherwise intended, and that occasioned by the breaking out of a fire at Newmarket; I dare positively affirm that if he had remained there a month longer, he would have come back in as much security, and as free from danger of being assaulted upon the road, as at the time [he] did. For of the fifty men which Mr. Rumbald demanded and unchangeably insisted upon the having provided to abett and assist him, I could never hear of above six or seven that were

said to be willing to engage in that attempt. And as several of these, upon their being mentioned by West and Goodenough, were disliked by others; for there was neither provision of Horse nor of Arms, made for them, or for any else. For as to the Arms that were bought by West; they were purchased after the danger was over, and without my being acquainted with it till it was done. Nor had he ever been reimbursed his money, if it had not been to silence his clamour, to hinder him betraying what he knew, and upon a prospect of using them speedily in the way [of] Insurrection. Neither can these few arms be thought of any significancy towards the execution of such a design, without the being furnished with Horse proportionable to the number of men that were to use them. And as these could not be bought, without the expending a vaster sum than he would have been inclinable to part with; for the difficulty which he found in recovering what he had once disbursed, would have been a perpetual bar to his laying out and hazarding more. And as this is the substance of all that occur's to my memory relating to that design; so I do acknowledg that among those embark'd in it, there were diverse other ways proposed for executing of it, besides that at Rye House; but most of them were in Rallery, and all of them vain and ridiculous. I do with-all confess, that they whose real aim was to hinder and divert it, were always the brightest of the company while they were among the Bigotts, in declaiming against Tyranny, in representing Tyrants under the more loathsome and opprobrious characters, and in mentioning those with glorious Elogies who had avenged mankind upon oppressors, and vindicated their country's from slavery. And as they found the usefulness of it, both in skreening themselves thereby from those men's jealousies and in the being better enabled to render their designs abortive, as well as to penetrate into them, so they were careful to say nothing but what was agreeable to their own principles, & which they still fancy themselves in a condition to justify by all the Topicks peculiar to that Theme. Nor were there any persons more forward than they in promoting an Insurrection; and that not only because they judg'd it to be a means of allaying the heats of men in prosecuting the other design; but because they thought it expedient as well as Lawful, abstracting from that consideration & motive. And had I been as really

ingaged in the one part of the Conspiracy, as I was in the other, no fear of danger on the one hand, or of approbry on the other should make me either extenuate or disown it. And could I purchase the King's favour as well as my life by detecting this to him, that I have discovered to you, I would abhor the doing of it; & rather chuse to fall under all the effects of his power & wrathe, than to escape them by so mean & base a thing.—STATE PAPER OFFICE, *Bundle Domestic, Charles Second, June 1683—No. 130*

APPENDIX II.

HISTORIANS AND THE PLOTTER.

“In fact,” says Burton in the *History of Scotland*, “Ferguson was the real demon of the Assassination Plot. He laid out the place and plan for the murder of the royal brothers. He consecrated a blunderbuss for the purpose, and, as a clergyman, had a sermon ready to be preached on the occasion of the happy deliverance.” Again, he says that the person chiefly instrumental in raising the insurrection, both in England and Scotland, known as Monmouth's Rebellion, was “that unworthy Scot we have already met with, Ferguson the Plotter.” And, alluding to the Montgomery Plot, Burton observes: “Ferguson is one of the historical characters to whom it is often deceptious to apply ordinary rules of credibility; and, if we are to take the word of Annandale, he was the master demon of this plot, as he had been of the conspiracies on the other side.”

But a greater than Burton has drawn a more startling picture in the *History of England*. “Ferguson,” says Macaulay, “was by birth a Scot, but England had long been his residence. At the time of the Restoration, indeed, he had held a living in Kent. He had been bred a Presbyterian, but the Presbyterians had cast him out, and he had become an Independent.” Macaulay takes the lines of his picture from Burnet, but it would rather appear from Wodrow's account that Ferguson had cast off the Presbyterians. “He had been master of an academy which the Dissenters had set up at Islington as a rival to Westminster School and the Charterhouse, and he had preached to large congregations at a meeting in Moorfields. He had also published

some theological treatises which may still be found in the dusty recesses of a few old libraries; but though texts of Scripture were always on his lips, those who had pecuniary transactions with him soon found him to be a mere swindler." This statement is apparently founded on a single allegation of Burnet, and it is not likely that a mere swindler, who was notoriously a poor man, would have been so trusted with financial arrangements as Ferguson was by his confederates. "At length," continues Lord Macaulay, "he turned his attention almost entirely from theology to the worst part of politics. He belonged to the class whose office it is to render in troubled times to exasperated parties those services from which honest men shrink in disgust, and prudent men in fear, the class of fanatical knaves. Violent, malignant, regardless of truth, insensible to shame, insatiable of notoriety, delighting in intrigue, in tumult, in mischief for its own sake, he toiled for many years in the darkest mines of faction. He lived among libellous and false witnesses. He was the keeper of a secret purse from which agents, too vile to be acknowledged, received hire, and the director of a secret press whence pamphlets bearing no name were daily issued. He boasted that he had contrived to scatter lampoons about the terrace of Windsor, and even to lay them under the royal pillow. In this way of life he was put to many shifts, was forced to assume many names, and at one time had four different lodgings in different corners of London. He was deeply engaged in the Rye-House Plot. There is indeed reason to believe that he was the original author of those sanguinary schemes which brought so much discredit on the whole Whig party. When the conspiracy was detected, and his associates were in dismay, he bade them farewell with a laugh, and told them that they were novices, that he had been used to flight, concealment, and disguise, and that he should never leave off plotting while he lived. He escaped to the Continent. But it seemed that even on the Continent he was not secure. The English envoys at foreign Courts were directed to be on the watch for him. The French Government offered a reward of five hundred pistoles to any one who would seize him." As a test of the accuracy of the moral description, it is well to quote the physical one in parallel columns with the source from which it was drawn:—

MACAULAY'S HISTORY.

"Nor was it easy for him to escape notice; for his broad Scotch accent, his tall and lean figure, his lantern jaws, the gleam of his sharp eyes, which were always overhung by his wig, *his cheeks inflamed by an eruption, his shoulders deformed by a stoop*, and his gait distinguished from that of other men by a peculiar shuffle, made him remarkable wherever he appeared."

PROCLAMATION OFFERING REWARD FOR APPREHENSION.

"A Tall lean man, Dark brown hair, a great Roman-nose, Thin-jawed, *Heat in his Face*, speaks in the Scotch Tone, a sharp Piercing Eye, *Stoops a little in the Shoulders*; He hath a shuffling gait that differs from all men, wears his Perriwig down almost over his eyes."

Could there be a better instance of verbal caricature? Many would admit "stooping a little," who would not like to be called deformed, and "cheeks inflamed by an eruption" suggests a great deal more than "heat in the face." Was it an oversight that, while every bad feature is exaggerated, the Roman nose, which often redeems an otherwise plain face, is wholly ignored? The historian's description gives the impression of a very ugly personage; that in the proclamation is consistent with the reverse, and a picture of Ferguson's brother, who served under Marlborough, shows a face of the same cast, yet represents a strikingly handsome man.

"But," continues the historian, "though he was, as it seemed, pursued with peculiar animosity, it was whispered that this animosity was feigned, and that the officers of justice had secret orders not to see him. That he was really a bitter malcontent can scarcely be doubted. But there is strong reason to believe that he provided for his own safety by pretending at Whitehall to be a spy on the Whigs, and by furnishing the Government with just so much information as sufficed to keep up his credit. This hypothesis" (borrowed from Oldmixon) "furnishes a simple explanation of what seemed to his associates to be his unnatural recklessness and audacity. Being himself out of danger, he always gave his vote for the most violent course, and sneered very complacently at the pusillanimity of men who, not having taken the infamous precautions on which he relied, were disposed to think twice before they placed life, and objects dearer than life, on a single hazard." The "pusillanimous men" who seem to have sat for

this touch in the picture are Rumsey and West, the most treacherous and false of the Rye-House informers. Dealing with Monmouth's declaration at Lyme, Lord Macaulay again says: "This Declaration, the masterpiece of Ferguson's genius, was not a grave manifesto such as ought to be put forth by a leader drawing the sword for a great public cause, but a libel of the lowest class both in sentiment and language. It contained, undoubtedly, many just charges against the Government. But these charges were set forth in the prolix and inflated style of a bad pamphlet; and the paper contained other charges, of which the whole disgrace falls on those who made them." He describes the Plotter as "Monmouth's evil genius," and exclaims, "and this man, at once unprincipled and brainsick, had in his keeping the understanding and the conscience of the unhappy Monmouth." Speaking of the expedition of William of Orange, he observes: "There was no place for a low-minded agitator, half maniac and half knave, among the grave statesmen and generals who partook the cares of the resolute and sagacious William." One other from Macaulay's references must be given as completing his diagnosis of the Plotter. It is his brief allusion to his post-Revolution career:—

"That Ferguson had a few months after the Revolution become a furious Jacobite was no secret to anybody, and ought not to have been matter of surprise to any. For his apostacy he could not plead even the miserable excuse that he had been neglected. The ignominious services which he had formerly rendered to his party as a spy, a raiser of riots, a dispenser of bribes, a writer of libels, a prompter of false witnesses, had been rewarded only too prodigally for the honour of the new Government. That he should hold any high office was of course impossible. But a sinecure place of £500 a year had been created for him in the department of the Excise. He had now what to him was opulence, but opulence did not satisfy him. For money, indeed, he had never scrupled to be guilty of fraud, aggravated by hypocrisy; yet the love of money was not his strongest passion. Long habit had developed in him a moral disease from which people who make political agitation their calling are seldom wholly free. He could not be quiet. Sedition, from being his business, had become his pleasure. It was as impossible for him to live without doing mischief as for an old dram-drinker, or an old opium-eater to live without the daily dose of poison. The very discomforts and hazards of a lawless life had a strange attraction for him. He could no more be turned into a peaceable and loyal subject than the fox can be turned into a shepherd's dog, or than the kite can be taught the habits of the barn-door fowl. The Red Indian prefers his hunting-ground to cultivated fields and stately cities: the Gipsy sheltered by a commodious roof, and provided with meat in due season, still pines for the ragged tent on the

moor and the meal of carrion: and even so Ferguson became weary of plenty and security, of his salary, his house, his table, and his coach, and longed to be again the president of societies where none could enter without a password, the director of secret presses, the distributor of inflammatory pamphlets; to see the walls placarded with descriptions of his person, and offers of reward for his apprehension; to have six or seven names, with a different wig and cloak for each, and to change his lodgings thrice a week at dead of night. His hostility was not to Popery or to Protestantism, to Monarchical Government or to Republican Government, to the house of Stuart or to the house of Nassau, but to whatever was at the time established."

It is a wonderful piece of word-painting, but much of it fades in a moment when tested by the hard, dry light of what its subject wrote unrestrainedly with no thought of future publication.

Such are the estimates formed by Whig writers: a Tory one states very forcibly the view of the Plotter's character which a general perusal of the references to him in the works of the day is fitted to produce:—

"Throughout the whole of his busy and desperate career," says Sir Walter Scott, "he appears to have been guided less by any principle, moral or political, than by the mere pleasure of dealing in matters deep and dangerous, and exerting his ingenuity to shake the quiet of the kingdom at the risk of his own neck. In organising dark and bloody intrigues, in maintaining the courage of the zealots whom he engaged in them, in carrying on the mystic correspondence by which the different parts of the conspiracy were to be cemented and conjoined: in guarding against the risk of discovery, and lastly in effecting a hairbreadth escape when it had taken place,—all these dubious, perilous, and criminal manœuvres at which the noble-minded revolt and the peaceful are terrified, were the scenes in which the genius of Ferguson delighted to exert itself. One touch," adds Sir Walter, contradicting positively the conjecture of Oldmixon and Macaulay, "alone softens the character of this extraordinary incendiary—in all his difficulties he is never charged with betraying his associates."

We now ascend to annalists of an earlier date, in whose pages the originals of later portraits are to be found. It was Bolingbroke who said that if ever he accomplished his intention of writing a history which should include the period in which he was himself in the heart of affairs, he should scrutinise with special care the statements of contemporaries, and test his own impressions of events even more rigidly than the records of the past. Contemporary annalists are most valuable in adding to our knowledge of facts, but their judgments are of less weight than even those of their successors. They are like men who mix in the strife, and whose subsequent recollection of the

battle comprises little more than "confused noise, and garments rolled in blood." They only see so much, and many things are concealed from them that afterwards stand revealed. Even if we discount their personal prejudices, there remains the influence on their minds of false rumour and erroneous opinion. In some cases there may be not only prejudices in favour of a cause, but prejudices against an individual. Among the many exceptions to which Burnet's *History of his Own Time* has been exposed, it was said of him by Lord Dartmouth, that the first inquiry he made into anybody's character was whether he was a Whig or a Tory, and as the answer was, so the character was painted; and a well-known story told by an intimate friend records that, after a debate in the House of Lords, he went home and altered every one's character in his History, for better or for worse, according as their speeches had pleased or displeased him. Dr. Burnet, whom Claverhouse in one of his despatches sarcastically alludes to as "Gibby," is not the only example of partiality; but from the tone of his allusions to Ferguson, and one of Ferguson's references to him, I cannot help thinking that their paths must have crossed and conflicted at some period, probably shortly after the Revolution. They were both natives of Aberdeenshire, and if the one had done more hard work for the Whig party, the other had the ear of the Court of Orange. When the Bishop of Salisbury wrote his history, at any rate, Ferguson was as distinctly a Tory as he had been a Whig when the lively pen of the prelate of Rochester delineated him.

There was published, a year or two after the detection of the Rye-House conspiracy, by special command of the King, "A True Account and Declaration of the horrid Conspiracy against the late King, His present Majesty and the Government." It was from the pen of Dr. Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, was written in a style full of invective, and had appended to it, "Copies of the Informations and original papers relating to the proof of the horrid conspiracy." The licence to print was issued when Monmouth was already on the sea. After describing those concerned in the design, the author concludes his list thus:—

"But of all the conspirators, whether English or Scotch, the man to whom, next the late Earls of Shaftesbury and Argyle, belonged the chief

Place and Precedence in the whole Diabolical Design was Robert Ferguson, a Scotchman: he had been Divers years a fierce Independent Preacher in the city of London, and had long brandished his Poysonous Tongue and Virulent Pen against the Government; He is manifestly convicted to have had a hand in the most scandalous Libels of these Times; and was always particularly cherished, magnified, and maintained by the Party for his peculiar Talent in aspersing the Government, and reviling His Majesty's Person. So that upon all accounts of his restless Spirit, fluent Tongue, subtil Brain, and hellish Malice he was perfectly qualified to be the great Incendiary and common Agitator of the whole Conspiracy; and after Shaftesbury's Death, it cannot be denied but he was the Life and Soul of all, especially for the carrying on of the Assassination."

And in a later place, referring apparently to the 'Detection' pamphlet, written in exile, in which the common Whig *canard* as to the death of Essex in the Tower having been the act of the Duke of York was ventilated, Sprat exclaims:—

"When all men's eyes are opened, and scarce a man of their own Party has any scruple in his thoughts about that business: yet that now at last their old advocate of Treason, Ferguson, should come forth in Print to outface so clear a Demonstration of Truth, and should try still to turn the Envy of that unhappy Stroke on the Court and the King, and his dearest brother; It cannot but seem a prodigious Confidence and Presumption that Ferguson should be their chosen champion in this cause! The Man who by so many Depositions stands outlawed, and Convict of having had the greatest share in the blackest part of the Conspiracy! The Man in accusing whom almost every witness, both Scotch and English, consented, so that his crimes have been proved by more than Twenty plain Evidences; particularly the Duke of Monmouth himself having confessed to His Majesty, 'That in all their debates Ferguson was always for cutting of Throats,' saying 'That was the most Compendious way;'—That this very Ferguson should so far make good his own words at parting when he vowed 'He would never be out of a Plot as long as he lived'! That now in his Banishment, under the Load of so many undeniable Treasons, he should still appear as the great patron of the Old Cause, and should presume he can impose on the World in a matter of Fact, so fully try'd, so clearly proved and determined! What can be a greater Impudence than that Ferguson should still expect that he can make any man living believe, the King himself or the Duke of York could ever be induced to practise his 'Compendious way' on the Earl of Essex? However, from this one instance the King hopes the World will judge, how most injuriously and barbarously he has been used by his Adversaries in their other Libels against him; in most of which it is well known the same venomous Pen was employed."

Such is the Tory denunciation; let us place side by side with it the Whig disparagement:—

"Ferguson," says Burnet, in the *History of his Own Time*, "was a hot and a bold man, whose spirit was naturally turned to plotting; he

was always unquiet, and setting people on to some mischief: I knew a private thing of him by which it appeared he was a profligate knave, and could cheat those that trusted him entirely: so though he being a Scottish man, took all the ways he could to be admitted into some acquaintance with me, I would never see him or speak with him; and I did not know his face till the Revolution; he was cast out by the Presbyterians, and then went among the Independents, where his boldness raised him to some figure, though he was at bottom a very empty man; he had the management of a secret press, and of a purse that maintained it: and he gave about most of the pamphlets writ of that side; and with some he passed for the author of them: and such was his vanity, because this made him more considerable, that he was not ill pleased to have that believed, though it only exposed him so much the more."

Burnet was notorious for retailing hearsay; according to the Duchess of Portsmouth, "the King, the Duke, and the whole Court looked upon him as the greatest liar upon the face of the earth," and the whole tone of Ferguson's references to money matters in his own letters casts very great discredit on the private story on which Burnet bases his dislike and avoidance of him.

We must add another hearsay opinion from a source of more authority than Burnet. In his account of his own life, Calamy, the historian of the Nonconformists, observes that, when in Holland,

"I expected to have fallen into the company of Mr. R. Ferguson (at Amsterdam), who was commonly reckoned a man by himself, and of as odd a make and mixture as any man of this age. But I missed him, and never was in his company. He had run through various scenes in England, and at last took shelter in Holland. I could not find that there, any more than here, he had any great character as to his honour or virtue, probity or veracity. A true history of his life would have discovered a great many secrets."

This observation of Calamy amounts to little more than a statement of popular opinion not to be wondered at, as the result of the strange transactions in which Ferguson had been mixed up. But these various judgments, taken together, present a strange figure, and a dark record, relieved only by a single trait. Is there anything on the other side? Christie, the biographer of Lord Shaftesbury, describes the Plotter as "a Scottish clergyman whom Dryden has scurrilously maligned," and estimates him as "a restless and vehement, but an honest man," basing his judgment on letters of Ferguson's which he had perused in the State Paper Office. But the first real effort to arrive at an understanding of the Plotter from his own

words was made in a novel published in 1873, and called "For Liberty's Sake," of which he is the hero. The author, Mr. J. B. Marsh, in the course of researches in the State Paper Office, stumbled upon a series of letters in the same handwriting, some of them signed distinctly by Robert Ferguson, the contents of which were so absolutely incompatible with the traditional idea of the Plotter's personality, that they at once aroused his attention. The similarity of handwriting led to the more valuable discovery of the manuscript narrative, in which Ferguson records in detail his share in the Rye-House Plot. In the Preface to his book, Mr. Marsh said :—

"Robert Ferguson, the hero of these pages, has one great claim to public attention. He has been abused by every historian of the seventeenth century, and has never been heard in his own defence. So far as he is concerned, I have allowed him to speak for himself; and the share he is represented as taking is drawn entirely from letters in his handwriting now in existence. . . . These letters," he continued, "appeared to me to furnish such an interesting insight into the domestic relations of one of the most celebrated men of the age, that I determined to use them as the groundwork of this story. There is also in the same office a closely written ms. relating to the Rye-House Plot, sufficient to fill five columns of the *Times*, in the handwriting of Ferguson, which supplies facts relating to that conspiracy that have never been brought before the world. Taking that ms. and the letters, a complete account was furnished of events by an active partisan in the most interesting period of English history from 1682 to 1688. The explanation they give of the part taken by Ferguson in the Rye-House Plot is quite natural, and one that better consorts with his character than that attributed to him by every writer up to the present time."

APPENDIX III.

THE PLOTTER AS AN ADVOCATE ON BOTH SIDES.

"The Justification of the Prince of Orange," and the inquiry "Whether the Protestant Religion was the Motive and End of the late Revolution," are so interesting in themselves, and as statements of the Whig and Jacobite cases respectively by an able writer, that I have thought it worth while to append an analysis of both that would have encroached too much upon the text.

The full title of the first was :—

“A brief Justification of the Prince of Orange, his descent into England, and of the Kingdom's recourse to Arms. With a modest Disquisition of what may become the Wisdom and Justice of the ensuing Convention in their Disposal of the Crown.”

Ferguson begins by declaring that he does not name those whose principles he contradicts, or mention any of the execrable doctrines by which they have endeavoured to betray us into slavery, “’Tis unsuitable to my Temper, as I do reckon it mean in itself to administer occasion whereby the Reputation of any that can be supposed reclaimable may become exposed or their persons be rendered any ways obnoxious.” Recommending “the utmost degrees of mercy towards the highest Prerogative authors,” he declares: “And as I have never hitherto acted upon other inducements than those of serving the Glory of God, and of asserting the Rights and promoting the Interest of my country: so the alone motive as well as prospect upon which I do now write is the vindicating of the methods that have been applied unto for our Relief and Redemption, and the offering such further measures as remain to be pursued for the establishing our Peace and Happiness upon foundations that will both ensure and support them. Nor does he deserve a name amongst, much less a share in the privileges peculiar unto, Englishmen, who will not contribute whatsoever lyeth within his Circle both for hindering our relapsing either into Confusion or into Thralldom, and for advancing the Tranquillity, Welfare, and Prosperity of the Kingdom.” Passing a eulogy on the condescension, self-denial, moderation, and temperance of mind of the Prince of Orange, he declares it to be extremely unwise not “to advance his Honour, Greatness, and Interest the more, by how much we find him through modesty to neglect them.”

He proceeds to argue that Government being of “ordination and Institution from God,” all rulers are so far “under Pact and Confinement” to exert their power for His service and honour, and the safety, welfare, and prosperity of those over whom they are established. It is not “in the choice of any Society, at their erecting the forms of Government under which they are contented to live,” to extend the power of their rulers beyond “the boundaries unto which God hath staked and con-

fin'd Magistrates in the Charters of Nature and Revelation." No society can confer on its rulers a power to "withdraw their Subjects from their Allegiance to God, act arbitrarily in prescribing and imposing what Religion they please, or destroy the meanest person save upon a previous crime, and a just demerit."

But it remains free to the People at the first institution of Government, "to prescribe and define what shall be the measures and boundaries of the public Good." And government being "founded on Compact and Agreement," it is incumbent on the ruler to "prove and justify the several Degrees and Measures of Authority and Prerogative which he pretends to claim." The original articles of agreement "became the Fundamentals of the respective Constitutions of Nations, and, together with the super-added positive Laws, are both the limits of the Ruler's authority and the Measure of the subjects' obedience." To extend the Governor's right and subjects' duty is treachery to the constitution and treason to the society. Any ruler that "does invade and subvert the Fundamental Laws of the Society does thereby *ipso facto* annul all the legal right he had to govern." The effect of a prince claiming what the constitution does not entitle, but preclude him from, is "depriving himself of all right to claim anything," and "the first and highest Treason is that which is committed against the Constitution." "They neither are nor can be traitors who endeavour to preserve and maintain the Constitution: but they are the Traitors who design and pursue the subversion of it." To subvert the Constitution is the greatest treason against the Person, Crown, and Dignity of the King, for it annuls his title and deprives him of all rightful and legal claim of Rectoral authority over the Society by destroying the Foundations on which it was erected. But the first and most absolute obligation under the original contract is incumbent on the Prince towards the People, for he is bound to rule according to the Tenor of the Laws, and preserve to them their reserved Privileges, Liberties and Rights. Advancing a step in his argument, the author declares: "Now, as England has been the most provident and careful of all nations" in reserving its rights and privileges, "so it has maintained them with courage and magnanimity peculiar to itself." "The People of England hath the same title unto and security for the enjoy-

ment of their Liberties and Properties that our Kings have unto their crowns or for defence of the Royal Dignity. For as they can plead nothing for what they enjoy or claim but Fundamental or positive Laws: so the subject's Interest in his Liberty and Property are conveyed unto him by the same Terms and Channels, and fenced about with the same Hedges and Pales." Quoting, in support of his contention, from Horn, Bracton, the ancient oaths of coronation and fealty, and the reply of Henry I. to the Pope, he observes: "'Tis upon this account affirmed of an English King that he can do no wrong, because he can do nothing but what the Law impowers him." In language that foreshadows the glowing periods of Burke, he alludes to the Great Charter, "in and by which our Rights stand secured, sworn and entailed unto us and our Posterity," the older laws of Edward the Confessor, ratified by the first Norman, and themselves previously collected by Edgar the Saxon. Our signal advantage and felicity is that whatever we become interested in by enactment of statute becomes part of our right and property, and not to be wrested from us again but by our own consent. Maintaining that the right has been reserved of "abdicating the Ruler from the Sovereignty upon absolute and egregious failure in the trust credited and consigned to him," and enforcing it by an allusion to the case of Richard II., he contends that it is the right of Parliament to inquire into and punish the crimes of judges and the executive under the King, alluding in passing to King Alfred having hanged forty justices in one year for corrupt judgments. Hence it is, he remarks, using a favourite expression of Lord Chatham, that as the House of Commons is by the Constitution "the great Inquest of the Kingdom," so "the House of Lords is the High Court of Judicature of the nation," and asserts that nothing but supineness "in not making so frequent and signal examples of this Parliamentary Justice among the Ministerial Dispensers of our Laws," had made "our withdrawn Prince's being trusted with the Executive part of the Government so mischievous unto the Kingdom, and the blame of it so Fatal at last unto himself."

He then goes on to inquire "whether a King of England can so misbehave in his office" as to justify deposition under the Constitution. "With a *Nolumus leges Anglice mutari* on their banners," our predecessors had waged open war against

King John and Henry VI.; they had dethroned Edward II. and Richard II. Every author meriting the least regard allowed certain cases, and if lunacy warranted displacement, there are certain moral distempers rendering more incapable of royal trust. On these grounds King James had justified his dethronement. By dispensing with the oath of supremacy precluding all foreign jurisdiction, and by receiving the Pope's nuncio, he had robbed the Crown of its brightest jewel; he had used the Executive power, bestowed to preserve the rights and liberties of the people, for their ruin and destruction; and by dispensing with laws, seizing charters, and practising on the freedom of election, he had subverted the fundamental constitution of the realm. But the rational part of mankind were not misled by the doctrines of Passive Obedience and Non-resistance, and "to the reproach of too many of the Crape, the very gentlemen of the Sword" were convinced of the duty of every Protestant and Englishman. It was only the thought of a free Parliament, not force or menace, chased the King from the throne and out of the nation.

"However," continues the author, with a touch of the sarcasm that had played over King Charles in the days of the Black Box, "after all the Evils which this late King had done us, we are willing to acknowledge the kindness we have received from him at last in his leaving the nation and retiring beyond sea. And that which is now incumbent upon us, as we would be just both to him and ourselves, is to bolt the door after him and so foreclose his Return." We had been once so foolish as to trust him, hoping the King would be too strong for the Papist: it were madness to do it again, having found the monarch too weak for the Papal bigot. "The fault is his in the deceiving us once; but it would be ours should we give him an advantage of deceiving us again." We had gone too far to retreat: if he came, he must be bound to France which had given him an asylum, and the States of Holland would exert all their force to prevent him being strong enough to revenge his misfortunes on them.

But though James could be no longer King, "yet it is indispensably necessary we should have one, a King being no less essential in the Body Politick of England than the head is in the Body Natural. To dream of reducing England to a

democratical Republick is incident only to persons of shallow capacity, and such as are unacquainted with the nature of Governments and the Genius of Nations. For as the Mercurial and Masculine Temper of the English Nation is not to be moulded and accommodated to a Democracy, so it is impracticable to establish such a Commonwealth where there is a numerous Nobility and Gentry, unless we first destroy and extirpate them. This is demonstrable from all Histories extant, whether they be modern or ancient. And either to hope for or endeavour to do this in England were the highest folly, as well as the most prodigious wickedness imaginable." To destroy the Monarchy involved the fall of the House of Lords, and "would draw after it the alteration of the whole body of our laws." So sensible of the value of the kingly style had been one of Oliver Cromwell's Parliaments, that it had advised him to exchange the name of Protector for that of King, and his failure to comply gave an advantage to his own creatures to depose his son.

The case to be dealt with was not the one for which there was plenty of authority, which our author quotes—the settlement of the Crown by a Prince Regnant and both Houses of Parliament. The right of Parliament in such a case was never questioned, he maintains, "till a few Mercenary People about ten years ago endeavoured to obtrude upon us a pretended Divine and unalterable Right to the Succession." And hitting the flaw in the Stuart pedigree, he declares the Divine Right doctrine to be "the more irrational, strange, and to be wondered at," since Robert II. of Scotland had thought it necessary to obtain an Act of Parliament to legitimise his older children by Elizabeth More, and the whole Title of the race of the Stuarts stood upon that Act of Parliament. "It was," he adds, "heretofore the more surprising to me to hear the advocates and Pensionaries of the Duke of Yorke plead for a Divine and unchangeable right of Succession, seeing all the claim the Scots race had to the throne of England, through their being descended from the eldest daughter of Henry VII., was from and by an Act of Parliament." For, though Henry had a legal title by the Common Law from his marriage with Elizabeth of York, yet he was so far from allowing it, as the representative of Lancaster, that he chose to possess by virtue of an Act of Parliament. This was necessary to validate even his Lancas-

trian claim, for it was through his mother, and she survived his accession.

But, he asks, "What power have the Houses to settle the Crown where the throne becomes vacant"—and he answers that we have many precedents of the Crown being "conferred and bestowed as the Great Councils and Parliaments of the Kingdom judged most conducive to the public safety and Benefit, but still keeping within the Sphere and Circle of the Royal Family and Line." Alfred, and Edward the Confessor, even William the Conqueror, "who is unjustly styled the Conqueror, as having subdued none but Harold and those that abetted him," received the crown "by virtue of a unanimous election and submission of the Peers and body of the People." So with William Rufus, "elected and consecrated," and Henry I., "crowned King by the Common Council of the Barons of the Kingdom," to the prejudice of their elder brother. It would be easy to multiply instances, but he thinks this is enough "to awaken the Peers and the Representatives of the Commons of England to claim and exert that power at this conjuncture which from the first original of the Government has belonged unto them."

His argument proceeds to postulate—*first*, that in the circumstances the Crown cannot be said to go by way of inheritance, but the disposal of it falls to the Nation; *second*, that nothing can limit that right of disposal but their own will guided by the public good; *third*, that as the two Houses cannot sit as a formal Parliament, it is extremely doubtful whether one has a negative on the other till the defect in the Legislative Body be supplied. "It will be no departure," he suggests, "in the Lords from their own grandeur, to consider of what force and obligation to the whole Commons of England the Declaration of their representatives in that matter will be."

And he comes with great solemnity to the practical object of the treatise: "Now these things being premised, I shall, as one who loveth the welfare of my country next to the glory of God, to His interest in the world, and to the happiness of my own soul, offer with the profoundest submission what I judge to be, in this great case now depending, most subservient to the securing Religion here and to the vindicating it elsewhere, and to the rendering this nation safe, opulent, and happy."

As to the Princess of Orange, they must be enemies to the

kingdom who would have anything withheld from her. Great in her quality, she is greater in her merit, and "had she never stood in nearness to a Crown, yet all who have the honour to know her would have confessed that she deserved one. But alas! though there may be a partner in the Royal stile, there can be none in the Regal Power." He advocates conferring on her no more than the royal title, and quotes the precedent of Philip and Mary, when the position of Philip was carefully restricted to that of a King-Consort. But by the royal style he means "not merely the bare and naked name of Queen:" she is to be named in all Laws; all Commissions, etc., are to run in her name; and she is to have the full sovereignty in reversion. "She will have all the honour and glory that accompany a Crown, she will be only eased of the Thorny Cares and next to insupportable Trials that under the present Conjunction of affairs in the world are likely to attend the Swaying of the English Sceptre. Yea, her virtue will give her an Empire that no Parliament can bestow. And while her Husband is vindicating and defending the Kingdom by an Exercise of the Sovereign power, she will more effectually reform it by her Manners than can be done by a thousand Laws. Her meekness towards all will even teach our highest Ecclesiasticks the duties of gentleness and Lenity; and her steadfastness in the Reformed Faith, together with an exemplary adorning of it, will prove the most sovereign means of recovering back again the perverted from Popery and the depraved from Prophaneness. And her being the best woman as well as the wife, that this or any age can give us an example of, doth sufficiently assure us that she will neither covet nor be willing to accept more than what I have mentioned, for everything beyond that would both be a detracting from the Glory of her husband and to the damage and prejudice of the Community."

"That which remains then to be done," he asserts boldly, "is to declare the Prince of Orange King, and to settle upon him the Sovereignty and Royal Power: allowing in the meantime unto the Princess the privilege of being named with him in all Leases, Patents, and Grants. This we owe him in point of gratitude; nor is his delivering the nation to be otherwise requited than by calling him to Rule and Govern it. His vindicating our Liberties and Laws deserves his being trusted

with the Execution of the one and with the Defence of the other. And by how much he forbears to challenge it, by so much is his Merit unto it the greater. What he avoids claiming out of Temperance, we ought to have the generosity to give. Nor is there any one so likely to sway the Sceptre with Moderation when possessed of it, as he who declined to snatch it when it lay within his reach. His unchangeable adherence to what he promised in his Declaration as a Prince, shews with what sacredness he will observe his oath as a King. Nor will he ever invade our Privileges who hath exposed himself to so many hazards for restoring of them. We owe it unto him also in point of Justice. At the same time that it is a gift and Benevolence, it is a debt due unto his virtue. He hath all the wisdom, moderation, and equity requisite in a King, and all the Courage and conduct needful in a General. War and Peace are equally his Province, and he stands imbued with all the qualities both for swaying the Sceptre and wielding the Sword. His very Passions plead for him, and in nothing can we be kinder to ourselves than in putting him into a condition of gratifying them. The Ambition that acts him of being the head of the Protestant Interest in Europe, tendeth no less to our benefit and safety than it doth to his honour and glory. And the Resentment he retains of Injuries done him by the French King will lead him not only to avenge himself, but this kingdom also, upon that common Enemy. And to add one thing more, the Crown ought to be bestowed on him on the ground of Wisdom and Interest. Nothing save the doing thus will cure the evils we have felt, and obviate those we fear, or state us in the possession of all the good we need and desire."

Ferguson then proceeds to state eight reasons for the policy he advocates, which may be thus summarised :—

1. It would assert the right of the English people. "Divine Right will by this means stand for ever branded and condemned. Nor will there be any cause of apprehending a storm hereafter towards the kingdom, from Spain or Savoy."

2. It would bolt the door against the return of the abdicated King. He or his partisans would not venture "to break open a gate where so vigilant, magnanimous, wise, and Martial a person stands guardian."

3. It would foreclose all claim to the Crown on the plea of

next heir, and "though it were easy to demonstrate the supposititiousness of the pretended Prince of Wales, the method proposed would both deliver ourselves from the necessity of that Enquiry, and prevent the Infamy with which the King must be eternally covered upon that detection."

4. It would more effectually secure our retrieved Liberties than by all the laws with which we fence and hedge them. He who refused the sovereignty of Holland from Louis as the price of betraying his country, will not invade the rights he is trusted to defend.

5. We shall become united among ourselves, and great and prosperous at home. And here there is a veiled allusion to Charles Second's management of English parties.

6. We shall become strong in power and allies abroad. And here there is a pointed reference to the Stadtholder of Holland's success in forming a European Union against France.

7. We shall become formidable to our foreign enemies, and avenge our own quarrels and those of Christendom on the haughty and usurping monarch of France.

8. We shall revive the hopes and promote the restoration of persecuted and exiled Protestants. "The eyes of the poor exiled French are upon this approaching Convention."

The only objection which can be advanced to his policy is, Ferguson thinks, that it may operate to the prejudice of the Princess Anne. And to that he has six answers:—

1. Where there is no claim by descent as in this case, there can be no injury done to any.

2. It is too probable the Prince will be the shortest lived of the three, when of course there is no prejudice.

3. The Prince and Princess of Orange may have children, and again there is no prejudice.

4. There is no great likelihood that the Princess Anne will outlive the Princess Mary.

5. The Princess Anne gains more than she loses by the substitution of her sister for her brother.

6. There is nothing proposed for the Prince of Orange which would not be granted to Prince George of Denmark in his turn. "Nor do I doubt that the Princess Anne is so good a woman, and so excellent a sister, that she will be desirous to purchase so great an honour and so real a benefit to the Prince her brother,

at the loss of a small and little more than an Imaginarie one to Herself."

Yet the very contingency contemplated occurred, and the unexpected survivance of William was to exercise the Plotter's ingenuity in a very different strain before many years had passed. Only six years elapsed before he was demanding,—

"Whether the preserving the Protestant Religion was the Motive unto or the End, that was designed in the late Revolution? In a letter to a country Gentleman as an answer to his First Query."

He sets out by alluding to the proof of his regard for his correspondent evidenced by his readiness to reply to his questions, seeing it will be "sure to provoke the Gentleman whom we have had the Folly as well as Disloyalty to set over us, and to furnish with Legions, and also to exasperate his Partizans," and be displeasing to those who "continue fond of their Delusions and proud of their Fetters and Chains." "So that under all the Prospect which I am both of censure and of personal Danger by this undertaking I have but very little hope of awaking and prevailing upon a Cheated, Impoverished, and Enslaved Kingdom to recover its Wits, reassume its Loyalty, and to vindicate its Liberty and Rights." "Who can rouse," he asks, "those to value and look after Freedom that place their Contentment in having their ears bored and nailed to Kensington Gates? It is the greatest Prodigy of this Age, though it hath been fertile of wonders enough, that they who boasted of taking Lions by the Beard can submit to be gnawn by Mice and Rats." Enlarging a little on this, he continues: "But as I have learned to govern myself by the Discoveries of Revelation and the Dictates of Natural Light, and by the Rules of the Civil Constitution and Society under which and where I was born and do live, and not by other Men's Opinion, or by little and mean regards to my own profit and Fame: so the only as well as the main Thing which I am solicitous about is that I may discharge my Duty to God, my King, and my country, without looking unto, and much less without being uneasy and anxious concerning Issues and Events, though I should be thankful unto God and joyful in myself to see my Countrymen persuaded and gained to relieve themselves, and to save the Kingdom and their Posterity by returning to their Fealty, and by claiming and

asserting the old English Constitution in all its parts and branches, and to all the useful, honourable, and legitimate ends and purposes of it."

Quoting the question that supplies the heading of the pamphlet, he declares that the danger of the Protestant religion "was then, and continues still to be made, the pretence of his invading these dominions, and of all that afterwards followed, till upon this specious and godly plea he had obtained to be seated upon the throne, as well as of all that has succeeded since, both in the beginning and the supporting of this destructive and impoverishing war; by which no benefit was ever intended to accrue to us, but which was entered upon, and hath hitherto been carried on, that others might be rendered safe and wealthy at the expense of our blood and treasure." By this the Judges do decoy on the people tamely to pay their taxes, by this your mercenary and sycophant divines would legitimate the rebellion, and this is "still accounted for more than an equivalent of all the distresses, miseries, and mischiefs."

But admitted that it were the real motive, "it had not hitherto been made appear that according to the rules of Christianity, the fundamentals of our Government, and the statutes of the realm, it is likewise a lawful and justifiable one." Moral Philosophers, the Principles of Reason and Revelation, all proved "that neither the goodness of the inducement nor the piety of the end will serve to legitimate our action, unless there be both a proper authority to license it, and a goodness either positive or natural in what is to be done when clothed with all its circumstances." Otherwise men might rob temples and plunder banks—nay, even murder their relatives, to "get into possession of estates which they may lavish away upon the saviour of our religion and our liberties, and towards the maintaining the sacred war in which he is embarked, and for raising up a new generation of soldiers to defend the Dutch barrier against France." He is careful to declare that Scripture only obliges us "in conscience to yield all that reverence, loyalty, and obedience to our sovereign which the lawful and just laws of the kingdom do impose upon and exact from us." "The Scripture was not given and designed to teach us politicks, or to prescribe the forms of Government, and the several limitations of them, further than that all Governments were to be for

God, and the good of mankind, and of societies." The same Divine sanction that obliged "us in England to submit to monarchy and be obedient to the King according to the municipal and statute laws of the kingdom," applied at Venice to aristocracy, and it was not sin in the King of France to engross the whole power of the State, though it would be so in the King of England, "standing limited as he doth by the laws of the Constitution and Government, and restrained by his coronation oath." He affirms that the Bible enjoins active obedience to the sovereign where the laws command nothing inconsistent with and repugnant to the law of God, and "passive obedience in all cases save in those in which the rules of the constitution and the statutes of the realms where we live give us liberty, right, and authority to withstand and oppose." He contends that even had the king entertained the designs he was accused of, there was nothing that authorised the taking of arms to resist and banish him, but very distinct statutes declaring it to be treason to take up arms against the King on any pretence whatsoever. To the "Law of the Land as the Standard and Measure of the people's obedience," we stand "bound, limited, and obliged by the laws of God, and the doctrines both of the Old and New Testaments, and this upon no less penalty than damnation."

His next contention is that no just and sufficient grounds had been given by King James for the pretence that the Protestant religion was in jeopardy. The noisy and clamorous suggestions "were fictions of knaves to impose upon fools." And against them he quotes the King's offer of a stipulatory law, which would have had the force and virtue of a Magna Charta, and of which the Prince and Princess of Orange were to be named as guarantees. The design was impracticable. For we could not grant that the Roman Catholics could have disputed our religion out of the kingdom, "and it had been the best policy which the Religious of the Roman Fellowship could have used, and I daresay will be thought so, if ever they should be furnished with such another opportunity," to confine themselves to their altars and devotional functions, and not venture into the polemical arena. "For under all their mistakes," he observes, "whereof some are of the highest importance, yet we ought to own and respect them

as Christians." The difficulty of such a design even in kingdoms where the public religion was that of Rome proved its impossibility in England: a few Roman Catholics in the army, or even a few Romanist regiments, only served to awaken the Protestantism of the rest. For proof of the special zeal for the Protestant religion in the army, he appeals to those who were in England in 1687 and 1688, and on a memorable occasion James had received startling evidence of its strength.

But a stronger fact exploding the design was the dispensation from the penal laws granted to the Protestant Dissenters, and granted "on the only true principle on which it could be done justifiably, viz., that it is the natural right of every man to chuse in what religion, and in which way of faith and worship, he will venture his Eternal State." It was not necessary, for the Romanists already enjoyed a practical toleration; "by being taken off from scratching, biting, and devouring one another," the Churchmen and Nonconformists were enabled to combine and unite. "And I would ask, if the King cast out and drove away the Devil Persecution by Belzebub, or in virtue of a hellish conspiracy against our religion, by whom have the gentleman at Kensington, and his tools and co-operators at Westminster, done the same?"

Another important fact was the King's hospitality to the French Protestant refugees, in spite of his own religion, "in which he was both sincere and zealous." It imperilled his amity with Louis; it displeased many of his own subjects to find so many skilled artisans coming to compete with them; and it increased the Protestant feeling of others to hear their experiences from their own lips. The "Compassionate and Merciful King" had not been requited as he deserved by those refugees, for "notwithstanding the Hosannahs they gave him at first, they were many of them in a little time the forwardest to cry Crucify him."

Again, had not the King refused the French succours which Louis offered him, a course utterly inconsistent with the schemes attributed to him? "If the States of Holland might send and the Prince of Orange bring Troops into England, let the pretence be what it will," with much more justice and right might the King have "received Turks and Tartars as well as French to beat them out." The States being in league and on terms of

amity with the King, could only act as they had done in violation of public Treaties; the Prince of Orange, "being no sovereign Prince, but the servant of a late though wealthy Republick," might exercise rule as Stadtholder in his own country, or "might have the privilege to set up as a Knight-Errant to combat Windmills or Kill Dragons," but could have no authority to attack and invade England. He kept now among us, "contrary to his solemn promise given in his Declaration dated at the Hague," Dutch troops, both horse and foot, as a badge of conquest, while he sent our native forces into Flanders to die in a Dutch quarrel. And, dealing in passing with the ineffable treachery of which Sunderland had the audacity to boast, Ferguson goes on to assert that the security of the Protestant Religion was not the real motive of the Revolution. Those that chiefly instigated and took part in it "were not persons disposed in their judgments, nor prepared by virtue and grace, to be concerned for any Religion further than as the seeming to own one ministers to their secular ends." And as a conviction of this is "as likely a means as any for undeceiving the credulous and well-meaning body of the People," he proceeds to develop it "without writing a satire or too much exposing the Atheism, unbelief, and Immoralities of particular men." "It does not," he is careful to observe, "detract from the worth of religion, but rather shews it to be an excellent thing, that all men will seek countenance from it;" while the fact that the fear for it hurried so many into the Revolution proves that, though their zeal may be greater than their knowledge, yet they heartily love it. But, in fact, a disgrace had been brought upon it, and it would not save us "to say, as a certain Presbyterian Person in Scotland did, That if we make bold to offend God in some cases and instances, yet we will be as good to Him another way." Not only "People of narrow compass of thought," but even those of "better and more discursive parts," might "be led astray, but the latter on serious and second thoughts, and clearer light," were easily recovered, and converted to God and their King. But the chief men of the Revolution were not men of any religion; some of them, indeed, regarded the Bible as "a romance feigned by a conspiracy of rulers and priests in order to govern the mob." There is a cutting allusion to Secretary Trenchard's simultaneous promises at The Hague,

where he pledged himself to the Prince, and at Whitehall, where he sued for a pardon to the King; and other leading men are dealt with in terms which were probably enjoyed at the time. The Bench of Bishops is not spared; Compton, and Burnet (whose affectation prevented him wearing lawn), are noticed as Jack Boots and Cambric Sleeves, who acted, the one to get a Bishopric and the other to preserve one. "And as for those called Whigs, . . . I will make bold to say of many of them, and that both with Truth and Justice, that they have no religion but their Interest, and sacrifice to no Deity but themselves. The Whig party is, generally speaking, a compound of the Atheistical of all opinions and persuasions whatsoever; and they can be of any religion, because they are really of none. They will take the Sacrament in the Church of England to be qualified to get or hold a Place, and then will herd with the phanaticks ever after, that they may be esteemed Partisans for our Sovereign Lord the People." Some wanted white staves, some to be revenged for fines imposed though remitted, and all to fish in troubled waters. They pursued *licentiam suam non Libertatem patriæ*. And indeed the "unparalleled treachery of most," he says with much truth, "puts this beyond contradiction." Alluding to the "audacious selling of the Kingdom for Pensions and Bribes," the defrauding of poor soldiers, "of whom, to use Tacitus's phrase, I may say *Quinis in diem assibus corpus et anima aestimantur*," and the partial exercise of legislative power that had followed the Revolution, he denies that this is merely hostile criticism. It is the testimony which the Gentlemen of St. Stephen's Chapel find one another, for when a certain sort of people quarrel many hidden truths are discovered.

He then turns his attention to those that co-operated abroad. It is no slander to say that the deputies of the United Provinces who sit governing at The Hague never enter into peace and war but for secular reasons. If the three kingdoms turned Pagans or Mohammedans, it would interest them only so far as it affected their trade or tranquillity. To turn the Portuguese out of Japan, they had paved the way to a huge massacre of Christians: they had furnished Louis XIV. with ships to reduce Rochelle. Had they interceded with their ally the Emperor for the Hungarian Protestants? Had they dealt with their other ally, the King of Spain, for abolishing the Inquisition?

Nor did "the great man who keeps his palace at Kensington act from other motives than those of Pride and ambition." We are reminded that the Stadtholdership was opened to him by the murder of the De Witts, that his private life is not free from dark stains, and of his praying at The Hague for the babe whose legitimacy he proceeded to question. The Catholic allies, especially that "old Odescalchi, Innocent XI.," with whom the League was concerted at Augsburg, are passed in review; and it is pointed out that because the old Duke of Brandenburg, a Protestant prince, would never allow such a design, the news of his death was received with joy at The Hague. The only two Protestant sovereigns in the world had not joined in the war against France. Then followed "a few strictures," bitter and severe, and most effectively worded, upon King William's home administration and its correspondence with the hopes that had been formed, and the promises that had been made. His haughtiness to the English nobility, his favouritism to his Dutchmen, and his rudeness to "the Beggary Scots," are all emphasised. But if, indeed, the safety of the Protestant Religion were his true object, that might have been accomplished without driving away the King, for a Parliament had been called, and "the Ancient and Legal way" was open. He had refused proposals sent by others, and made the Earl of Feversham a prisoner when he came with a message from the King. "Nor needs there more to discover how remote he was from sincerity in all the pretences on which he came hither, than that he would never hearken to any overtures which might lie in a tendency to the making one word of them good."

"Thus," says the Plotter, "I have with all the brevity the subject would allow, endeavoured to answer your first question. If the style be a little piquant, the scribblers for the usurper have set the example," and the majesty of the theme demanded warmth. "And it would have been an indecorous thing to have looked grave upon Baboons; or have hunted wild Boars without a spear or weapon. Yea, it were to frustrate the great End of languages and speech, and to quarrel with the Rules of good sense, to ascribe Mildness to Tyrants, Honesty to Robbers, or Truth to Lyars."

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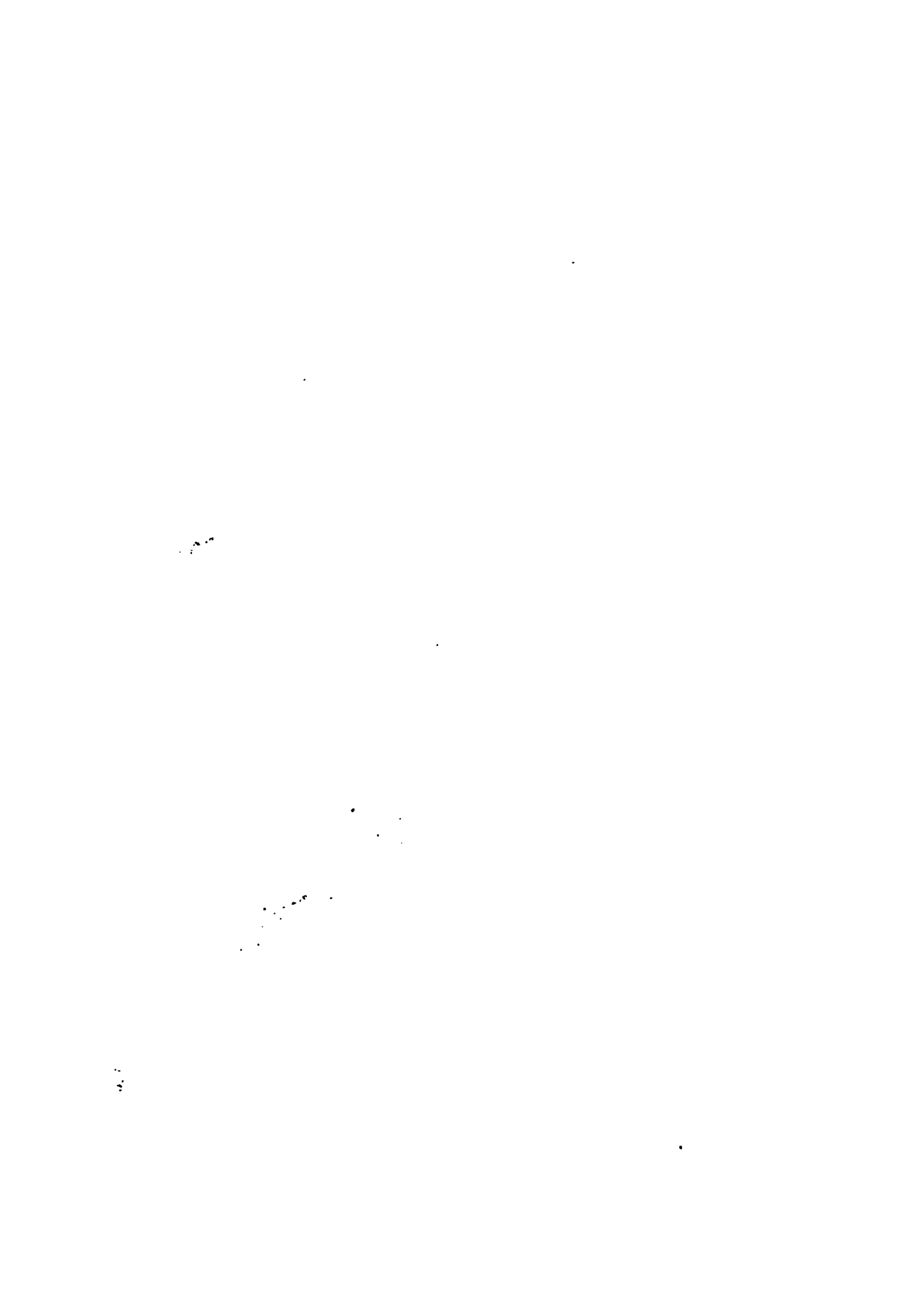
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